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THE DOVE

OF THE

TABERNACLE;

OR,

THE LOVE OF JESUS

IN THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST.

BY

REV. T. H. KINANE, C.C.,

TEMPLEMORE.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

HIS GRACE THE MOST REVEREND DR. LEAHY,

ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL.

NEW YORK:

P. M. HAVERTY,

9 BARCLAY STREET.

1874.

NIHIL OBSTAT:
EDMUNDUS O'REILLY, S.J.,
CENSOR. THEOLOG. DEPUT.

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TO THE

MOST SACRED AND MOST ADORABLE

HEART OF JESUS,

IN PRAISE, HOMAGE AND ADORATION;

IN THANKSGIVING FOR ALL BLESSINGS GRANTED;

IN REPARATION FOR ALL INSULTS;

IN SUPPLICATION FOR ALL NEEDFUL GRACES,

This Little Book

IS MOST REVERENTIALLY DEDICATED.

3786

TESTIMONIALS.

—o—

59 Eccles Street, Dublin,
April 28, 1873.

MY DEAR FATHER KINANE,

I fully approve of your little book, *The Dove of the Tabernacle*, which you kindly sent me. I am sure it will promote a great spirit of piety and devotion among the people, hence I feel great pleasure in recommending it.

I remain,
Your faithful servant,
✠ PAUL CARD. CULLEN.

The Palace, Limerick,
March 27, 1873.

MY DEAR REV. SIR,

Many thanks for your sweet little book, *The Dove of the Tabernacle*, which is really worthy of its name. It is a beautiful tribute of your own devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and it cannot fail to be profitable, instructive, as well as edifying, to all who read it. I wish it a wide circulation, and I earnestly recommend it to the faithful of this diocese.

Believe me to be
Most faithfully yours,
✠ GEORGE BUTLER,
Bishop of Limerick.

To the Rev. T. Kinane,
Templemore.

Skibbereen, *March* 25, 1873.

REV. DEAR SIR,

I know not how to thank you for the little work which your love for the Sacrament of the Altar prompted you to compile. It is a little gem in itself, and the title you have given it is a most appropriate one. It cannot but enliven the devotion of the readers, and excite additional reverences, and enkindle his love for our Divine Lord in that great mystery which, on such irrefragable authorities, you have so well established and explained. I should be very glad, indeed, to see it in the hands of those of my flock who can read it. They could not but be benefited by it, and draw from it those sentiments of reverence and fervor, of humility and of confidence, by which they should be animated while present at the Holy Sacrifice, or kneeling before the tabernacle. I shall recommend it to my children here in Skibbereen, and bring it under the notice of the priests of Ross. Thanking you for the services you have rendered to religion by your valuable little book, and wishing it a wide circulation,

I remain,
Rev. dear sir,
Your faithful servant,
✠ M. O'HEA.

The Rev. T. H. Kinane.

The Palace, Killaloe,
March 31, 1873.

DEAR FATHER KINANE,

Your book is well calculated to plant and nourish piety in the souls of our simple people. It appeals more to the heart than to the understanding, and with them will therefore produce more merit. I wish there were a copy of *The Dove of the Tabernacle* in every family.

Faithfully yours.
✠ JAMES RYAN.

Rev. T. Kinane.

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Tullow, *April* 10, 1873.

MY DEAR FATHER KINANE,

I have read your sweet little book from cover to cover, and while perusing it, found some of the feeling in my heart which the disciples going to Emmaus experienced in the company of their Divine Master, "were not our hearts burning within us whilst He spoke on the way?" Your work is a beautiful epitome of the treatise of the most holy Eucharist, full of light and heat—light for the understanding, heat for the heart. I therefore heartily join your most esteemed prelate in wishing God speed to *The Dove of the Tabernacle*. In visiting our convents, I will recommend it as eminently calculated to enliven and influence the minds of the holy spouses of Christ.

Faithfully yours,

✠ J. LYNCH.

Rev. T. Kinane, C.C.

Letterkenny, *March* 31, 1873.

REV. DEAR SIR,

I thank you very much for the copy of *The Dove of the Tabernacle* which you kindly sent me. You can gather my idea of the merits of your beautiful little book from the fact that I recommended it in a pastoral addressed to the clergy and faithful of this diocese. It is, I think, admirably fitted to deepen and extend devotion to Him "whose delight it is to be with the children of men" in the tabernacle. Wishing you every blessing, and your truly pious book all manner of success.

Yours faithfully,

✠ JAMES M'DEVITT.

Rev. T. Kinane, C.C.

Ballaghadereen, *March* 31, 1873.

My dear Rev. Father,

I have to thank you for the copy of your excellent work. At your respected request I have given some time to "look it over," and I find no better form of expressing my great admiration than in the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori, "were it in my power," writes the holy doctor, "I would publish as many copies of this little work (*Treatise on Prayer*) as there are Christians on earth, and would give to each a copy." I wish I had the means of placing your most interesting book in the hands of every youth in this diocese.

As an earnest of the sincere practical interest I take in your literary labors, and of my deep sympathy with the feelings of the good Irish C.C., I beg you to order for me one hundred copies of the *Dove of the Tabernacle*. Wishing you life and strength to accomplish other useful and pious projects,

I remain,

My dear Father Kinane,

Your faithful servant,

✠ F. S. M'Cormac.

Coadj. of Achonry,

Ballaghadereen.

Rev. T. Kinane, C.C.

Kilkenny, *March* 26, 1873.

My dear Father Kinane,

I thank you very much for the little *Dove of the Tabernacle*. It is a book well calculated to promote devotion to the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, the great source and centre of all Catholic piety. I trust that it may have a wide circulation among our people. I sincerely wish it every success, and yourself every blessing.

Your faithful servant,

✠ Patrick F. Moran.

Bishop of Ossory.

Rev. T. H. Kinane, C.C.,

Templemore.

Galway, *March* 28, 1873.

REV. DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged for the copy of your work, *The Dove of the Tabernacle*, which you were good enough to send me. It is an admirable treatise on the Holy Eucharist, whether as a sacrament or a sacrifice, well calculated to promote devotion to our Divine Lord in the mystery of His love, which may be justly regarded as the great centre and source of all other Catholic devotions. It needs only to be read to be highly prized. I would wish to see it in the hands of all clergy and laity. The well-merited praise bestowed on it by your own gifted Archbishop at the close of his preface to the work, renders any further commendation of it unnecessary, as every word emanating from his Grace of Cashel is always sure to carry with it the greatest weight.

Wishing you every success,

Believe me yours very faithfully,

✠ JOHN MACEVILLY.

Rev. T. H. Kinane.

Belfast, *April* 3, 1873.

REV. DEAR SIR,

I have received your very excellent work, *The Dove of the Tabernacle*, and read some chapters, enough to make me consider it is a useful contribution to our pious literature. In these days, when we have so much of the "cunning of the serpent," we badly want "the simplicity of the dove"—a spirit of strong but simple faith—faith in revelation and its mysteries. This spirit of faith and devotion is likely, I think, to be infused and enkindled by your work; and I therefore wish it a wide circulation, and recommend it besides as most instructive. It is most creditable for a hard working missionary priest,

I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

✠ P. DORIAN,

Bishop of Down and Connor.

Rev. T. Kinane, C.C.

Monaghan, *April* 23, 1873.

REV. SIR,

I have perused your little book on the Holy Eucharist, so aptly named *The Dove of the Tabernacle*, and I have found in it, though small, unpretending, very much to instruct and edify. One cannot but admire the comprehensiveness and judicious arrangement of the work. Its simplicity of style and the devotional tone pervading it. To the learned and unlearned it will be found useful and acceptable, touching all the dogmatic, moral, and ascetic details of the question, with a charming introduction from the pen of the illustrious Archbishop of Cashel. Praying that your industry may bear fruit in a wide circulation of this admirable little book,

I remain your faithful servant,

✠ JAMES DONNELLY,
Bishop of Clogher.

Rev. Thomas Kinane, C.C., Templemore.

Mullingar, *April* 2, 1873.

The Dove of the Tabernacle is admirably calculated to extend among the faithful devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

✠ THOMAS NULTY.

Mount St. Bernard, Leicester,
April 8, 1873.

MY DEAR REV. FATHER,

I am sure *The Dove* is well calculated to do a considerable amount of good; and, when its merits are known, there is no doubt but your beautiful little work will have an extensive circulation among those of a pious turn of mind. I wish it may, and may it be a means of attracting many to Him who deigns for our sake to reside in the tabernacle.

Believe me, my dear Father Kinane,
Yours affectionately in Christ,

✠ J. B. ANDERSON, Abbot.

Adare, *May* 1, 1873.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Pray accept my best thanks for the beautiful book which you have had the great kindness to send me. I had heard of it from Father Russell of Limerick, and from the terms in which he mentioned it, I was anxious to see the work. Now that I have been able to read it, my impression is strong that the work is a very valuable one, and one which cannot fail to do great good, if its circulation be as large as its merits deserve, and as may be expected from the rapidity with which two editions of it have been disposed of.

It is impossible to calculate the amount of good which might be done in our country by such books, if our people could be reduced to give them a serious attention. Nothing could contribute more to impart to our fellow-countrymen that seriousness of mind and steadiness of purpose which are so requisite, if a *high* religious condition is to be gained and maintained.

Without such aids we cannot expect that even the best impulses will be accompanied by a corresponding perseverance. A deeply-rooted *personal* religion is more especially necessary for a race that emigrates so much as the Irish. There can be no other safety when the ties of home and neighborhood have been broken. Had it existed among us for the last half century in the degree in which it might have existed, the number of Catholics in America might, perhaps, have been double what it is.

A large proportion of our people, at least of those educated by Christian Brothers and Nuns, ought to be able to profit by your most excellent work. I hope it will have a place in all the libraries established by them. It is a great pity that adequate means are not taken for the diffusion of religious books in this country. I should think that a certain number of religious books might usefully be sanctioned by our bishops for the instruction given in our National Schools at the extra hours.

Believe me,
Very truly yours,
AUBREY DE VERE.

Rev. T. H. Kinane.

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PREFACE.

THE Holy Eucharist is the most precious treasure of the Catholic Church. When our Divine Lord, sitting by Jacob's well, asked the Samaritan woman to give him to drink from the waters of the well, he took occasion to speak to her of another water of life which he would give. "Ah!" said he—yearning not for her salvation alone, but for that of millions besides—"ah! if thou didst know the gift of God and who he is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee, living water. Whoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but he that shall drink of the water that I will give shall not thirst for ever" (*John*, iv. 13, 14). What is this living and life-giving water of which our Divine Lord speaks? It is the Holy Eucharist, the well-spring of life, at which the soul athirst for God's grace can satisfy its desires to the full. They who drink from it drink from the fountain-

head of all grace, and, replenished by those life-giving draughts, they grow day by day in holiness of life, till in the end they pass from hence to a life of everlasting glory with Christ.

At another time Jesus, having fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, was followed next day by an immense crowd, expecting he would feed them again with the bread which perisheth; whereupon he took occasion to discourse to them of the bread of life which perisheth not. "Labor not," said he, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you" (*John*, vi. 27). "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die" (*Ib.*, 50). What is this bread "which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die?" Our Lord tells us in the words immediately following—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (*Ib.*, 51, 52). "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh

of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up on the last day" (*Ib.*, 54, 55). Well did our Lord redeem his word of promise. The bread of life here spoken of he gave on the eve of his death, when he instituted the Holy Eucharist, leaving his own most precious body and blood as a legacy of his love to his followers for all time to come. "And, whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat; This is my body. And, taking the chalice he gave thanks: and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For, this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (*Matt.*, xxvi. 26–28).

Thus has our Lord of his all-bounteous goodness provided for our souls a heavenly food, wherewith they may be nourished unto life everlasting. For our mortal bodies he provided ample and suitable nourishment, making all nature tributary to man, to whom he gave power over every living thing—the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the air, and

the beasts of the field; so that not a blade of grass springs from the earth but what he quickens into life for the support of his creature man. Having thus provided for the perishable body, he provides for the godlike, spiritual, immortal soul, a divine, a spiritual, and immortal food, even his own most precious body and blood, present in the adorable Eucharist. And, as the body cannot grow or live without being supplied with food meet for its sustenance, so neither can the soul grow in holiness or maintain its spiritual life, but must languish and die, unless we partake of the bread of life in the Holy Eucharist. "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (*John*, vi. 51).

By worthily partaking of the blessed Eucharist, we are body and soul closely united with our Lord in this present world, which union, so it be not finally interrupted and broken off by sin, is the forerunner and the pledge of a still closer union with him in the world to come—of future immortality, in which the body as well as the soul will participate. Since the material food taken into our bodies and incorporated with the substance becomes one

with them, the body and blood of the Lord, when we partake of them, are sacramentally incorporated with the substance of our bodies, so that Christ becomes the bone of our bone and the flesh of our flesh, and we may with truth be called in the language of St. Cyril of Jerusalem *χριστοφοροι* "carriers of Christ," and "concorporeal," having the same body with Him. Wondrous union this of the body and blood of Christ with our mortal bodies, plainly indicated by our Lord when he said, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Very remarkable are the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem on this same subject: "Therefore with fullest assurance let us partake of (them) as the body and blood of Christ: for in the form of bread is given to thee his body, and in the form of wine his blood; that thou by partaking of the body and blood of Christ mayst be made of the same body and the same blood with him. For thus too we become carriers of Christ, because his body and blood are diffused through our members: thus it is, that according to the blessed Peter, we become partakers of the divine nature" (*Catech. Mystag.*, iv.).

More wonderful than that of the body, is the union of the soul with Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, whereby the Christian advances day by day, as by so many steps of a ladder, from grace to grace, and from virtue to virtue, and "from glory to glory," "unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ" (*Eph.*, iv. 13) imitating, though it be at a great distance, the example of him, of, whom it is written, that "he advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man" (*Luke*, ii. 52).

The union of soul and body with our Lord in the blessed Eucharist, if preserved to the end of life, is the prelude to, and the cause of, our union with him for ever in the glory of his heavenly kingdom, when we shall see him, not as now, "through a glass in a dark manner, but face to face" (*Eph.*, xiii. 12)—not hidden under the sacramental forms, but revealed to us in the fullness of his unclouded glory. Nor is it the soul only that will see the glory of the Lord, but also the body. Perish in the grave the poor body will, but not for ever. It had the seeds of immortality planted in it, because during life it was nourished with the body and blood of

Christ, and it is not fit that the body which had been nourished with the body and blood of Christ should perish for ever in the grave. It will not so perish : it will rise to immortal life. The dry bones will be gathered together, and they will be covered once more with flesh, and once again the breath of life will be breathed into the body, and the body endued with new life will be reunited to its companion soul, that both together may enter into the glory of the Lord, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," and which it hath not "entered into the heart of man to conceive" (1 *Cor.*, ii. 9). Behold the faith and the hope of the Christian which we make profession of in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." Behold the faith and the hope which rest upon the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist it was, which from age to age, and in all ages, imparted life to the Church, giving zeal to the Apostles to extend the kingdom of Christ to the ends of the earth, giving courage to the Martyrs to die for his name, giving endurance to the Confessors to maintain his cause in the face of the world, giving chastity to the Virgins to lead the life

of angels upon earth, giving sanctity to Christians in every rank and state to live up to the holy law of God. Does temporal affliction weigh heavily upon your spirit? Come to Jesus in the sacrament, and he will make every thing light and easy to bear. Do you mourn for the loss of some dear departed one? Seek your Lord in the Holy Communion, and in him you will find a true comforter for your sorrow-stricken soul. Are you compassed round about with the temptations of the enemy? Here is the helmet of salvation and the shield of faith wherewith to resist "the fiery darts of the most wicked one" (*Eph.*, vi. 16). Does pain rack the limbs of your body? In this balm of life you will find an assuager of your pain far more soothing than all the balm of Gilead. Are the shadows of death deepening around you? Is the grave about to close over your mortal remains? Receive your Lord into your bosom, and then you may exclaim with St. Paul: "O death! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting?" (1 *Cor.*, xv. 55). All through life's journey the Holy Eucharist is our food, our strength, our life. When the battle of the Christian life begins, when the passions of

youth are more or less developed, at that critical period the young person gets strength and courage in the *first Communion*, to fight against the world the flesh, and the devil. In the long warfare continued through the period of manhood on to old age, the Christian soldier, if he will not succumb to his enemies, if he will successfully fight the battles of the Lord, takes care often and often to recruit his strength by *frequent Communion*. And, in the great final struggle, when he has to look death in the face he is strengthened by the Holy *Viaticum*, and being so strengthened, he defeats the enemy's last and most desperate efforts, and passes safely through death to life eternal. It is after a manner with us Christians as once it was with the Prophet Elias. As in the strength of the food brought to him by the Angel of God the Prophet "walked forty days and forty nights unto the mount of God, Horeb" (III. *Kings*, xix. 8), so the Christian fortified by the bread of Angels pursues his way through the wilderness of this life without fainting, and passes safely through the many perils which beset his path, till at the end of his journey he happily reaches the true mount of God,

higher and holier than Horeb, Heaven itself.

And, all are bidden to the Eucharistic banquet by the Divine Master of the feast. From out the tabernacle our Lord lovingly stretches forth his arms, saying to us every one: "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated" (*Cant.* v. i.) "Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Mat.*, xi. 28.) Is it possible that any one should be found not to hearken to this loving invitation? Alas! it is but too true. Some there are who never come to the table of the Lord: others come, but come too seldom: others again come who had better stay away, because when they do come it is to profane the holiest of things. With respect to the first class of persons, thanks to God, their number in Ireland is very small indeed. Too many there are who, under divers pretexts, approach the table of the Lord so seldom that they seem not to know the gift of God, or at least not to prize it as Christians having a lively faith in the presence of our Lord in the Sacrament of his love. Would to God it could be said, that in these our days there were none to profane the body and blood of our Lord by receiving them unworthily. But,

seeing that in the time of the Apostles themselves there were those who, according to the testimony of St. Paul, ate and drank "damnation to themselves, not discerning the body of the Lord" (I. *Cor.*, xi. 29,) who would be bold enough to assert that in a degenerate age such as ours, when faith is so much on the wane and charity has waxed so cold, there are not unworthy communions, as there were then, and in such number too as to draw down the judgments of God? Who can say but that in many and many instances, temporal calamities, epidemics, premature deaths, are the chastisements God inflicts nowadays for the profanation of the holy mystery, just as in the days of St. Paul he inflicted similar chastisements upon those guilty of the same dreadful sin? May it not be true now as then, that "therefore are there many infirm and weak" among us, "and many sleep" the sleep of death? (I. *Cor.* xi. 30.)

But, be the number of unworthy communions what it may, be it small, or be it great, one thing is certain, that Christians can never love or reverence our Lord in the holy Sacrament as much as they ought. To spread this reverential love of the Lord in the blessed Eucharist, especially in the hearts of the sim-

ple faithful, has been the object of the pious Author in writing this little unpretending Book, which we strongly recommend to our faithful people. If it is little, and if it is unpretending, it is not but that it will be of use in the hands of every class and description of persons. All without exception, the more instructed and those that are less so—all will find in it much to edify them, much to profit their souls. Whoever attends to the pious instructions, with which its pages abound, will come to know better the gift of God, the most precious of all his gifts, will partake of it devoutly, will therefore share plentifully in the streams of grace which spring up unto life everlasting, of which it is the fountain-head. Gentle and simple will learn from this book to love our Lord more ardently in the blessed Eucharist, to receive him more frequently, to approach him with better dispositions, to visit him oftener in the churches, to assist at Mass more frequently and more devoutly; and when such pious practices prevail in any parish or locality, they are sure to draw down the blessings of Heaven upon the heads of the people. This little book, aptly styled "The Dove of the Tabernacle," is well calculated to diffuse

such a spirit of piety among the people, and will, with God's blessing, effect an amount of good far exceeding its bulk or pretensions. Therefore we wish God-speed to THE DOVE OF THE TABERNACLE.

✠ PATRICK LEAHY,
Archbishop of Cashel, etc.

THURLES, *Jan.* 28, 1873.

THE

DOVE OF THE TABERNACLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE INCARNATION AND BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The Blessed Sacrament is the soul of the Church, the life of the priesthood, the centre of all our love and all our affections. The Blessed Sacrament is Jesus, and Jesus is our all. Jesus is our first beginning and last end. He created us; He regenerated us anew in the waters of baptism; He is our strength in youth, our support in old age. He is our life in living, and our hope in dying; in death He will be our Judge, and in Heaven we hope our reward.

Though love began in the creation, the greatest manifestation of the love of God to man is contained in the sacred mysteries of the Incarnation and Blessed Sacrament. God's

love for man could go no further. All God's love, power, and wisdom are centred in the Divine Babe and Host. Were the Divine Babe and Divine Host better known, they would be better loved. Did we but meditate on the infinite love and mercy of Jesus in the Incarnation and Blessed Eucharist, our cold hearts would warm into love for Jesus, and we would shudder at even the thought of offending Jesus.

How awfully solemn are the inspired words that express these two sublime mysteries:

"The Word was made Flesh."

"This is My Body."

"This is My Blood."

"The Word was made Flesh!" What more sacred words on the tongues of men or angels! All they convey! The food of holy thought and meditation they bring to the mind! By them we are reminded of man's fall, the depth of the malice of his guilt, and the price paid by the Almighty to raise him up again.

When Adam fell, God promised a Redeemer; but what teaches the enormous guilt of even one mortal sin God in His wisdom delayed for the long period of four thousand years to fulfil His promise. May we all learn

from this to hate and avoid mortal sin. During these long and dark years, the patriarchs prayed, and the prophets sighed, that the "Just One" might come, the days of man's captivity be shortened, and the gates of Paradise opened again. How they looked out for the Blessed Virgin, the woman who was to crush the head of the serpent that seduced Eve! They cried out in the beautiful language of the inspired text, "Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth" (*Isa.* xvi. 1). "Oh, that Thou wouldst break through the heavens, and come down" (*Isa.* lxiv. 1). And again, they wept, sighed, and prayed, day and night, that "the heavens would drop down their dew, and the clouds rain the Just, and that the earth would be opened, and bud forth a Saviour" (*Isa.* xlv. 8). "Stir up Thy might and come to save us" (*Ps.* lxxix. 3).

God heard these holy prayers offered with tears and sighs. "The weeks of years were shortened." "The Word was made flesh." How full of mystery and mercy these sacred words! They tell us the Just One is come; the Lamb, the Ruler, is sent down; the Saviour is budded forth. They tell more. God's justice yields to His mercy; He fulfils His

promises; the doors of heaven, closed for four thousand years, are thrown open; a ray of the glory of Paradise beams on the elect in Limbo; angels weep with joy that the vacant benches, forfeited by the fallen spirits, are to be filled up; that more voices may swell the chorus to the greater glory of God. The Redeemer, the Messiah is Incarnate.

The Incarnation suggests other holy thoughts to the mind—sweet thoughts of the Mother of God. Jesus and Mary, the Son and Mother, are never separated. The woman so long expected, she who was to crush the serpent's head, is born some years; she is still unknown amidst the maids of Israel, for blushing modesty and exalted sanctity are always hidden. The wonder of ages, a Virgin Mother, foretold by the prophet, is a reality. "A virgin," said *Isaias* (vii. 14), "shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, who shall be called God with us." And what a virgin! She is "full of grace;" she has "found favor with God;" she is "blest amongst women." No stain of sin ever sullied her pure soul. "Thou art all fair, and there is no spot in thee" (*Cant.* iv. 7). "Thou art fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array" (*Cant.* vi. 9).

O Immaculate Conception! Our days have witnessed its solemn definition. A thousand thanks to heaven high, that we can say with Catholic and divine faith: Mary conceived without sin, pray for us! This is a singular privilege of the Blessed Virgin, that original sin never sullied her immaculate soul. Even for one instant she was never the enemy of God, or under the dominion of the devil. And all this in honor of the Incarnation.

We are not surprised that God, by a special privilege, preserved her from original sin, and from the slightest actual sin, when we call to mind that of the pure flesh of Mary was formed the sacred and adorable body of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

To prepare her for this, God in His Omnipotence lavished upon her all the choicest treasures of heaven, all the graces that a pure creature is capable of, to beautify and adorn her soul.

The time is come. The eye of the adorable Trinity looks down with complacency upon the beautified soul of Mary. The adorable Trinity, who held counsel to make man—"let us make man to our image"—holds counsel, so to speak, to redeem man. The Father

sends the Son. The Holy Ghost co-operates. The Son is willing. From amidst the countless millions of adoring spirits who surround the throne of God, one of the brightest, the archangel Gabriel, is charged to bear a message of glad tidings to earth. He obeys. With breathless, profound reverence he hears the mystery. Entrusted with the most solemn embassy ever given to a creature, he wings his flight from heaven to earth. The palaces, the courts of the great and noble, have no attraction for him. The attention of heaven is riveted upon one soul in the city of Nazareth. The angel finds the Virgin absorbed in holy prayer. He salutes her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (*Luke* i. 28). The timid, blushing Virgin is alarmed: "she is troubled at his saying."

The angel comforts her: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God." "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus" (*Luke* i. 30, 31). The virgin is now more puzzled. Long since she had registered in heaven a vow of perpetual chastity —consecrated her soul and body to the living

God. She hesitates. What glory and honor to be the mother of God! But how violate her vow? "I know not man." To relieve her from all difficulty, the angel says to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (*Luke* i. 35). The Virgin, assured that her vow of chastity would be respected, bows and consents, saying: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word."

What a supreme moment! Heaven opens wide! The Word Eternal, the Son of God, equal in all things to the Father, descends on earth. A human soul is created; a body is formed out of the pure flesh of Mary Immaculate; the body and soul are united, and to this body and soul is joined hypostatically the Word, the Eternal Son of God, thus forming One Divine person and two distinct natures, all dwelling in the holy tabernacle of the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin. This is the dignity, the sanctity of the Mother of God. This is the beginning of man's redemption. This is the awful and divine mystery—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us; the glory, as it were, of the only-

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (*John* i. 14).

Solemn and holy are the words expressing the incarnation of the Son of God: but not less solemn and holy are the words expressing the consecration in the Blessed Sacrament. "This is my body." "This is my blood." What thoughts they suggest to the mind! The infinite Sacrifice and holiest Sacrament of the New Law. Jesus, the daily victim on thousands of altars. Jesus, the daily Food of millions of souls. Jesus, ever living and loving in countless tabernacles. Jesus in the viaticum, wafting the departing souls to Paradise.

True, the tongues of men cannot tell that love and mercy that forced, so to speak, the Son of God to leave the bliss of heaven, and on earth to clothe Himself with human flesh; nor can the tongues of men or angels express the love and mercy that bring down countless times this self-same God from heaven's glory, and on our altars clothe Himself with the still more lowly form of bread!

Adorable mysteries of the Incarnation and Eucharist! How like! In the Incarnation, Jesus took flesh in Mary's womb; in the Eu-

charist, He takes flesh in the priest's hands. "Oh!" cries out St. Augustine, "to be venerated the dignity of priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God becomes incarnate" (*in Ps.* xxvii.).

Men and angels will stand amazed for all eternity at the humiliations of the Son of God in the Incarnation. St. Paul says (*Phil.* xi. 6): "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but debased himself by taking the form of a servant." In the Blessed Sacrament our Divine Lord debased Himself lower still; for He takes not the form of a "servant," but the more lowly form or species of bread. In the Incarnation, the Divinity is concealed beneath the Humanity; in the Blessed Sacrament, both the Divinity and Humanity are hidden. The Son of God conceals the splendor of His glory and majesty, and confines His Immensity in the smallest particle of the Sacred Host! Well might the holy Council of Trent say: "In the Eucharist, Jesus poured out all the riches of His love for men" (Sess. xiii. c. 2).

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul, it was for thy salvation that the Eternal Word was made Flesh. It was to bring thee to heaven that the Son of God left heaven, and clothed Himself with human flesh in Mary's chaste womb. Wilt thou ever forget His goodness, mercy, and love?

RESOLUTION.

My Blessed Lord Jesus, I will not forget Thy goodness, mercy, and love; hence I resolve to recite piously, three times every day, on bended knees, at the sound of the bell, "The Angelus" (the Incarnation Hymn), in honor of the Word made Flesh. Good Jesus, grant me grace to keep this holy resolution.

CHAPTER II.

DIVINE BABE AND SACRED HOST.

THE more we meditate on the Divine mysteries of Jesus, the more we hate sin and love Him. Every moment of His divine life suggests subjects for holy thought and motives of holy love. These most powerful motives are contained in the wonders of the Incarna-

tion and Blessed Sacrament. Let us continue the comparison from the last chapter.

We have said the humiliations of our Divine Lord are not less in the Blessed Sacrament than in the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, the Eternal Word descended once, in one place, becoming man in Mary's womb. In the Blessed Sacrament, the same Eternal Word descends not only once, but as often—the number is countless—as masses have been said, and will be said, from the Last Supper to the end of the world! Not in one place only, but in every clime and every land, from the rising to the setting sun! "From the rising of the sun" (says the prophet *Malachias* i. 10), "even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation, saith the Lord of Hosts." O Divine Sacrifice of the Mass! stupendous mystery of Divine love! offered daily on tens of thousands of altars, making "great" the name of the Lord among the Gentiles, and giving infinite glory to the Lord of Hosts. The mass is the real "clean oblation" foretold by the prophet.

The Son of God become incarnate obeyed

the Eternal Father. The same Son of God present in the Eucharist obeys the voice of a simple mortal, His own creature, a poor, weak, alas! imperfect priest! Who can avoid exclaiming, O infinite love of Jesus in the Babe and Host! imprint on the souls of men these divine mysteries, that all may know Thee and love Thee.

Jesus is unknown and forgotten. "He came into the world, and the world knew Him not." Mary alone on earth knew the moment "the Word was made Flesh;" for as yet Joseph knew not the Virgin had conceived. How like the Host! The priest celebrates even when there is no congregation; the Word is made flesh in his hands; the priest like Mary, is the only adorer.

Where was accomplished the grand mystery of man's redemption? Was it in a great city? In a gorgeous palace? In a splendid mansion? No. That everything might be in keeping with humility of the Handmaid of the Lord, it was in the village of Nazareth; obscure enough, and in a still more obscure cottage. In this humble, modest dwelling, since aptly called "The Holy House," and to this day preserved with veneration at Loretto, the

archangel found the Holy Virgin absorbed in prayer, and announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation. "While all things were in quiet silence, Thy Almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Thy royal throne" (*Wis.*, xviii. 15.) Such was the first dwelling of the Divine Babe in Mary's womb!

How like the Divine Host on our altars! Sometimes, no doubt, the greatest genius of man, obeying the noblest aspiration of the soul, exhausts its powers in designing churches, altars, and tabernacles; and enriches them with the most precious of earthly gifts, as dwellings for the "Holy of Holies." But how often is the home of the Sacred Host more humble than the "Holy House" of the Divine Babe! How often is Jesus born in the cot, in the bog, and on the mountain's side! O infinite love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! This touches every heart: but to us, the children of St. Patrick, it comes home more than to others. Shall we or can we ever forget Thy love in the Blessed Sacrament? It was Jesus in the Holy Eucharist that kept alive the faith of our fathers in the dark midnight of persecution. The heretic and the stranger razed to the ground our churches,

monasteries, and altars—monuments of the faith and piety of our forefathers. Jesus had no earthly home for His children to adore Him: "He had not whereon to rest His head." The Lamb of God despised not their poverty, but breathed love upon His children. In the mountain's fastnesses, in the bog, and in the forest, Jesus came down from glory, the heavens His canopy, the rude rock His altar! He forgot not His poor children in the dark hour of their sorrows. He came to give them courage to fight the battles of their faith; to steel their hearts against the terrors of persecution and the seductions of the tempters. The Blessed Eucharist fed the lamps of faith ever living in their souls, and gave them strength and courage to live and die for Jesus; to despise sorrows, sufferings, exile, nay, death in its fiercest shapes, for the faith of St. Patrick. Divine love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! in behalf of our forefathers, who, strengthened by the Bread of Angels, transmitted to us the faith, as pure as it fell from Thy divine lips, we give Thee thanks, O Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and pray that the children of St. Patrick, at home and abroad may be ever faithful like them.

In the Incarnation, we have said with St. Paul (*Phil.*, ii. 7), our Divine Lord "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as man." In the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus has emptied Himself more still, if it admits of degrees, retaining not the form, likeness, or habit of man, but the species of bread and wine!

The Babe of Bethlehem has a winning attraction of love for the devout soul. The long journey over a mountainous country, from Nazareth to Bethlehem, fatigued Mary and Joseph. Wearied and exhausted they arrive in the evening, but, alas! there is no lodging for them, for the inns were all full. They go from house to house, humbly begging shelter even for one night. They are spurned at the doors, despised for their poverty. O dear Jesus, will nobody receive Thee and Thy Mother? Dear Lord, we too have often shut the doors of our hearts against Thee, and expelled Thee thence by mortal sin! Accept now the lodgings of our hearts, with their affections for ever.

Fatigued, but resigned, Mary retires from the dwellings of men into a cave made in a

rock, the stable of the ass and ox; and then, "While all things were in deep silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word came down from heaven from Thy royal throne" (*Wisd.*, xviii. 14, 15). Then was born the Messiah, the "desired of the eternal hills" (*Gen.*, xlix 26.) O humility, O poverty of the Son of God! Allow us, O Lord to approach with reverence, and look with the eyes of faith on the Divine Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.

The Babe is weak, but He is the Omnipotence by "whom all things were made." He is helpless; His very breath sustains, as it produced creation! He is in Mary's arms, yet planets and systems revolve in His Immensity. Poor! the heavens and the earth are full of the majesty of His glory. Without homage! all the angels of God adore Him. "Adore Him all you His angels" (*Ps.*, xcvi. 7.) "For all the angels of God adore Him" (*Heb.*, i. 6).

But let us return to the Blessed Sacrament. Sanctify, O Lord, our eyes, that we may presume to behold Thee; and whilst we contemplate Thee, save us from being overwhelmed

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by Thy glory. "He that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory" (*Prov.*, xxv. 27.) In the Sacred Host is more weakness, more helplessness, more poverty. Here the Eternal, too, is born in time; the Immense is circumscribed to narrower limits; and the essentially Independent more subject to the will of His own creatures! We can only say with St. Thomas of Villanova: "O strong wine of charity! Thou hast conquered the Invincible; the Almighty is become thy captive. O true excess of charity!"

Amid all the humiliations and poverty of the crib or manger, still a gleam of the glory of heaven, now and again, shone upon earth, to announce to the world the birth of the Messiah. Swift and willing messengers were despatched to convey the glad tidings. The glory of heaven with great brightness, shone round the holy shepherds. The heavenly messenger said to them: "Fear not: for behold I bring you tidings of exceeding great joy. This day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign to you: You shall find the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was

with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest" (*Luke*, ii. 10, 11.) And again, the Almighty sent another messenger to the wise men of the East, to announce the birth of the Redeemer. The miraculous star conducted them, shone upon their path from the East, "until it came and stood over where the Child was" (*Matt.*, ii. 9.) Well may "they rejoice with exceeding great joy, and, falling down, adore Him."

How different the Sacred Host! To announce His birth, no gleam of Heaven's glory shines round the altar, no angel sent to convey the glad tidings; no heavenly army to sing, Glory be to God in the highest; no miraculous star to shed its beams on the Host. By faith alone we "fall down and adore Him." Let us say, with St. Thomas of Aquin, "the Blessed Sacrament is not only the greatest of all God's miracles, but an abridgment of all the wonders He has ever wrought." The humiliations of the Son of God are greater in the Blessed Sacrament than in the Incarnation.

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul, neither thou nor an angel can conceive the sacredness of these holy words: Divine Babe, Incarnation, Word-made-Flesh, Infant Jesus; or Sacred Host, Blessed Sacrament, Blessed Eucharist, Holy Communion. They are so full of awe and love, mystery and reverence. Hast thou ever profaned them?

RESOLUTION.

Jesus! my Divine Redeemer! I know these words are too holy even for an angel's tongue! Who is not guilty of irreverence to Thee? How often art Thou not blasphemed! To try to make reparation for my own irreverences, and for the blasphemies of the wicked, I resolve, as often as I read or hear these sacred words—Incarnation, Word-made-Flesh, Jesus, Sacred Host, Blessed Sacrament, Blessed Eucharist, Holy Communion, etc.—to bow my head in reverence, and in my heart to make an act of adoration and love.

Infant Babe! grant me help to keep this pious resolve.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETTO.

We beg our pious readers to excuse this chapter; though the digression scarcely needs an apology, it is so connected with what we have been treating—the place and humiliation of the Incarnation. A few of the leading facts of the history of the Holy House (for it is justly called by that name), where the Word was made Flesh, and where Jesus and Mary lived for near thirty years, cannot fail to interest the reader.

The judgments of God fell thick and heavy upon the unhappy Jews, once the chosen people of heaven. Our Divine Redeemer had foretold the subjugation of their country and the destruction of their city and temple. The Roman legions, under the command of Titus, the Emperor's son, fulfilled the predictions in the year 72 A.D. While the whole country was overrun and devastated by the Roman soldiers, God did not allow a profane finger to touch the "Holy House!" It escaped the general destruction. God waited for his own time to expose it to the venera-

tion of the world. This time arrived in the reign of Constantine the Great. In the year 326, St. Helen, the Emperor's mother, visited the holy places sanctified by the footsteps of the Son of God. The pagan statues of Venus and Jupiter were removed from Mount Calvary, and God rewarded her piety by a miracle in the finding of the True Cross. At Nazareth, St. Helen's soul was filled with holy joy at finding the "Holy House" exactly the same as when Jesus and Mary lived in it. She gave thanks to God, and resolved not to make the least change in it. She ordered the imperial ministers to construct round it a magnificent temple, on the façade of which she got engraven on marble this short but expressive inscription: "Hæc est Ara in qua primo jactum est humanæ salutis fundamentum." "This is the altar on which was first placed the foundations of man's redemption."

The fame of the Holy House rapidly spread through Christendom, and pious pilgrims, from the king to the peasant, from every country, hastened to venerate the holy place.

St. Louis, King of France, after fighting the battles of the Lord under the banner of the Cross, and wearing the chains of the Con-

fessor, made a pious pilgrimage to Nazareth in the year 1252. He arrived there on the 25th of March precisely, the Feast of the Annunciation. In the garb of a true penitent, covered with sackcloth, his eyes streaming with tears, and his heart filled with emotion, this great saint entered the holy chamber; there heard mass, and received holy communion from the hands of Odon, bishop of Frescati, the Apostolic Legate. To this day, memorials of this visit are to be seen at Loretto.

In the year 1291 all Palestine fell into the hands of the Saracens; the Mussulman conquered the Christian; the holy places, sanctified by the sacred feet, or purpled by the blood of Jesus, were profaned by the Mahometan Turks. But as for twelve hundred years God had guarded one spot against the profanation of Jew or Pagan, so He preserved it now from the insults of the Turk and Mahometan. That sacred spot was—where the "Word was made Flesh." God preserved it; and how? By the most unheard-of, but well-authenticated prodigy—a prodigy which, put again and again by friends and foes through the crucible of historical criticism, has come out unscathed. God sent

His angels, and transported the Holy House from Nazareth to Dalmatia! This wonderful translation took place on the 10th of May, 1291, in the Pontificate of Nicholas IV.

Dalmatia was not its final resting place. God had destined another land to possess the precious treasure. Hence, after a stay of three years and seven months, it was seen, on a sudden, to ascend into the air, cross the Adriatic Sea into Italy, and finally rested at Loretto. The people received with joy the precious gift from heaven, and testified their faith and gratitude by the richest offerings to the shrine. Pope Paul II. built round it a vast and magnificent church, which was completed by the great Sixtus V., who ordered the following inscription to be engraven, in letters of gold on black marble, on the façade: "Deiparæ domus in qua Verbum Caro factum est." "The house of the Mother of God, in which the Word was made Flesh." This is fresh to the present day.

Humility, to confound the pride of man, was the great lesson our Divine Lord came to teach. Everything connected with His birth, life, and death, preaches this great virtue. The home of His Incarnation is in keeping. The

height of the Holy House is thirteen feet three inches, its length twenty-nine feet four inches, and width twelve feet eight inches. These are the dimensions of the modest dwelling of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! There you see to this day the little fireplace, and the little cups out of which the Blessed Virgin used to feed the Infant Jesus in her arms! There is the altar on which the Apostles themselves used to offer the divine sacrifice of the mass. Over the altar is the celebrated statue of the Blessed Virgin, with the Infant Jesus in her arms, of cedar wood. This statue, so well known as "Our Lady of Loretto," is venerated as the oldest, or one of the oldest, in Christendom. Tradition ascribes it to the days of the Apostles. The Son and Mother were crowned with brilliant diadems of gold and diamonds by the venerable Pontiff, Pius VII. The statues and shrine are loaded with votive offerings of Catholic faith. Gold, silver, and precious stones of the richest description, decorate the sacred objects. The value of the sacred vessels (sacristie du trésor) is estimated at two millions of francs.

It is not our object to describe the basilica in the centre of which the Holy House rests.

This magnificent church is enriched with privileges and favors of no fewer than twenty-one Sovereign Pontiffs—from Paul II. down to our own holy and illustrious Pontiff, Pius IX.: thus all bearing testimony to the truth of the great historic fact. This basilica enjoys all the privileges of the seven great ones of Rome. There sit in their confessionals the Apostolic Penitentiaries, speaking most of the living languages of Europe, to confess the clients of Mary from every clime and every land. Who that have seen can ever forget? Those pious Christians may have journeyed some thousands of miles, through frost and snow, or under the scorching heat of the sun. See them the first time they enter: they devoutly kiss the holy ground on which Jesus walked. Witness the warm tears in their eyes, the emotions of their hearts visible in their faces. God alone sees the secret working of supernatural grace in their souls, when they receive into their bosoms the Body and Blood of Jesus in the very spot where they were first formed. How tell what passes in the soul of the holy priest, when, upon the very altar on which the Apostles, over eighteen hundred years ago, celebrated the divine mysteries, he

calls down from heaven the very same "Word" that on that sacred spot "was made Flesh" in Mary's womb! The thought is overpowering. O Sacred Host! O Divine Babe! how sublime the mysteries of our holy faith!

God thus miraculously preserved the place of the Incarnation. With equally zealous care He has guarded the altar where the first host was consecrated, and where the first mass was celebrated by Jesus Christ Himself. Both were equally precious in the eyes of heaven. As Loretto possesses the Holy House, St. John of Lateran, Rome, guards the altar of the Last Supper.

How full of admiration the Providence of God! During the last two thousand years, empires and kingdoms rose and fell. Revolution after revolution has swept away thrones and dynasties. The mightiest structures which the genius of man has designed have crumbled and yielded to time. "The face of the earth has again and again been renewed." But whatever God watches over, no matter how fragile, no power of man can ever destroy. Hence we may well conclude, that with the other holy relics of the Incarnation and Pas-

sion, those touched by the virginal flesh of the Incarnate God, or steeped in the blood of Redemption—the Manger, the true Cross, the Nails, the Pillar, the Seamless Garment, the Crown of Thorns, the Lance, the Towel of Veronica, etc.—the "Holy House of Loretto" too will escape the fury of men, the wreck of ages, and last to the end of time.

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! this and similar miracles are intended by God to enliven thy faith, and make thee ever trust in the watchful care of Divine Providence, and in a special manner to teach thee to reverence God's sanctuary, God's church, which is "holy," for the Eternal Word comes down and dwells there. Alas! how often has God's church been profaned by the wicked! Is it always duly respected even by the good? Hast thou thyself been ever guilty of any irreverence?

RESOLUTION.

My dearest Jesus! Thy church, where Thou dost ever dwell, is as holy as the Sanctuary at Loretto. Year after year, O Lord, we read, with sighs and tears, of some sanctuary

profaned, some altar or tabernacle containing the "Holy of Holies" desecrated. I adore Thy patience. To try to make reparation for all, and for my own irreverences, I resolve never to be guilty, either in word, or look, or dress, or gesture, of anything unworthy of the sanctity of Thy house, and always "to reverence Thy sanctuary." "Thy church, O Lord, is the house of God and gate of heaven" (*Gen.*, xxviii. 17).

Divine Host! make me faithful to this resolution.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST DURING HIS THIRTY-THREE YEARS ON EARTH IN THE FLESH, AND "FOR ALL DAYS" IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

If we knew Jesus better, we would love Him more. Every mystery of His divine life in the flesh, or Blessed Sacrament, contains new motives of love. Jesus is God made man, and every moment of His sacred life gives infinite glory to His Eternal Father, and advances the salvation of souls. What holy

thoughts, what pious meditation, what strong motives to serve God, the present chapter suggests—the hidden life of Jesus in the Flesh and Blessed Sacrament! Well might the inspired writer say: "Verily, thou art a hidden God" (*Is.*, xlv. 15).

The Son of God took flesh in Mary's chaste womb, and there remained, like any other child, for nine months. Mary alone on earth knew of His presence. She alone adored Him. All heaven, the adorable Trinity, the choirs of angels, smiled on earth; earth returned no thanks. "He was in the world, and the world knew him not" (*John*, i. 10). The sighs and tears of the prophets are heard: "the heavens have rained down the Just." "The Lord," "the Lamb," "the Ruler," "the Messiah," expected for four thousand years, is come.

St. Joseph at length hears the secret from an angel. He, next after Mary, adores "the Lord," "the Lamb," St. John "leaped for joy in his mother's womb" at the presence of the Saviour. St. Elizabeth pronounced Mary and the fruit of her womb "blessed." The shepherds paid homage to the Babe in the manger, and the three wise men bowed down

and adored Him. Of the many millions that then peopled the world, how few knew of the birth of the Redeemer of mankind! "Verily in Thy birth Thou art a hidden God."

The greater part of the life of Jesus, as well as His birth, was hidden and concealed. Whilst yet an infant, Herod, far from adoring Him, sought "to destroy Him." An angel whispered to St. Joseph, "who arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and retired into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod" (*Matt.*, xi. 14). How long they remained in Egypt we know not for certain, as the Gospel is silent. One thing is certain—His life there was hidden and unknown.

After the death of Herod, God's holy angel again whispered to Joseph, "to arise and take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel" (*Matt.*, xi. 20). "He retired into the quarters of Galilee, and coming, He dwelt in a city called Nazareth." Here He dwelt; here "the Child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in Him" (*Luke*, xi. 40). We next hear of our Divine Lord at the age of twelve. He remained in Jerusalem after His parents, who, after three days' sorrow and search, at length

"found Him in the temple in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions" (*Luke*, xi. 46). And the Gospel adds: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." Now, from the age of twelve to thirty, there is not as much as one word about our Divine Lord: so during those eighteen years, His life was hidden and unknown to the world. "He was in the world, and the world knew Him not."

What a subject of useful meditation for the pious soul—the life of Jesus, hidden and unknown to the world for thirty years! During those long years Heaven was on earth, and still earth was not on fire with Divine love. The "New Jerusalem hath no need of sun or moon to shine in it, for the Glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (*John, Ap.*, xxi. 23). This glory of God was on earth, but the lamp of the Lamb was hidden in Nazareth, and the world remained enveloped in the darkness of sin and error. The "Way," the "Truth," the "Life," "the true Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," was among men; but darkness did not comprehend the Light, and men sat still in the shades of death, sin,

and error. During these thirty years, proud doctors and cheating philosophers perverted mankind by their false systems and doctrines. Eternal Truth was silent, for "His hour was not yet come." In His hidden life, our Divine Lord practised the lessons which He afterwards taught to the world, viz., "Not to do your justice before men to be seen by them. When you give alms, let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doth. When you pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret," etc. (*Matt.*, vi.) This teaching and this practice of Jesus Christ have been the model and support of the anchorite in his cave, the nun in her cell, the missioner in the desert, and the pious Christian in the world. "You are dead," says St. Paul, "and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (*Col.*, iii. 3). May we all love to imitate the hidden life of Jesus in the Flesh, and find our delight in true piety, unknown to and concealed from the eyes of men.

But let us return to the Blessed Sacrament. And here we can say with truth, "Verily Thou art a hidden God." "The Divinity," says St. Bernard, "is hidden, the Humanity

is hidden, the bowels of charity only appear." If we adore with amazement the thirty years of the hidden life of Jesus in the Flesh, how count the hidden years of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament?

Begin with the last supper. Travel in spirit over Christendom. Count, if you can, the churches, the tabernacles, the ciboriums, and the pixes of the first century; double the number for the second century; and so on down to the nineteenth. Conceive if you can, all together, the countless churches, altars, tabernacles, ciboriums, pixes, etc., of nineteen centuries past, and of centuries yet to come, in every clime and every land, from the rising to the setting sun, where the "clean oblation" has been, is, and will be offered to the "Lord of Hosts," and you begin to form some faint idea of the hidden life of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! During the day how few adore and keep, so to speak, company with their Divine Lord; during the night none at all. The churches are closed; silence reigns around the tabernacle. There is no human voice, no accent of love, no look of praise, no sigh of reparation; the angels' song alone ascends before the Lord.

During the thirty years at Nazareth, Jesus had at least Mary and Joseph to adore Him; but in countless tabernacles, day and night during long ages, the Lamb has no adorers. "How lovely [we may add, how lonely] are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!" "The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself. Thy altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God" (*Ps.*, lxxxiii. 3). But if in these our days the love of God is chilled in many breasts; and if ingratitude, indifference, heresy, and infidelity, stalk abroad to insult Jesus in the Sacrament of his love, in these our days, too, thanks to God, the Almighty has raised up in His Church, religious orders of both sexes of the "Perpetual Adoration," who spend the day and the night before the tabernacle of their Saviour.

These are the consecrated spouses of the Lord; these the incarnate angels of God, who not only during the day but during the night, when fatigued nature is reposing in silence, watch before the remonstrance, offering their hearts' love as holocausts of reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Holy doves of the tabernacle! singing with the spirits above, singing with virginal lips the chaste hymn

round the Lamb, "Holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; the earth is full of Thy glory." "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and benediction." "Thou hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" (*Apoc.*, v.).

If, then, in the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus has some faithful souls, like Mary and Joseph, to love Him; still, for the most part, all over the world, His love is slighted, His churches neglected, His altars lonely! With good reason did our Divine Lord make the following touching complaint to His servant, Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, as she was kneeling before the tabernacle. Our Lord, disclosing to her His Sacred Heart, said: "Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much that it has spared nothing, even to the exhausting and consuming itself, to testify its love; and yet in return, I receive from the greater number but contempt, coldness, ingratitude, irreverence, and sacrilege, in the sacrament of My love." Blessed Lord! the best of us are cold, ungrateful, and irreverent! Accept, O Lord, the reparation of thy devoted servants. Let

us often travel in spirit round Christendom; and in spirit let us kneel before every pyx and tabernacle where Jesus is least honored and most abandoned; let us first offer to Him the love and homage of our poor hearts; next let us in desire make an act of faith in and love to the Blessed Sacrament for every soul that God ever created, and that for every moment of their existence; for poor pagans who have never heard of the name of Jesus, though redeemed by the Blood of the Heart of Jesus; for infidels and heretics, who insult Jesus; and for ourselves, perhaps the most ungrateful of all! Then let us offer to the forgotten Jesus the united love of all holy souls on earth; lastly, let us ascend to heaven above, let us invite heaven to supply for earth, let us offer to Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament, the love of all His saints, the love of all His spirits, from the lowest angel to the highest seraph, and beyond all, the love of the Immaculate Soul of Mary! One desire more—that every moment of our lives be an offering of this love of earth and heaven to Jesus hidden in the sacrament of His love.

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! The hidden life of Jesus in the Flesh and Blessed Sacrament is to teach thee to love true piety, which seeks to be hidden and unknown; to despise human respect, vain glory, and the esteem of men; to regard nothing valuable but what is precious in the sight of God; and finally, to sanctify all Thy thoughts, words, and actions, by the supernatural and highest of all motives, the greater glory of God. "It is no longer I who live—it is Jesus Christ who liveth in me" (*Gal.* xi. 20).

RESOLUTION.

My hidden Lord Jesus, for Thy sake, I resolve never to do any act for vain glory or the esteem of men, and to hide from the world, as far as I can, all my acts of piety and devotion, and to offer every morning, to the greater glory of God, in union with Jesus, all the thoughts, words, and actions of the day.

Jesus, my God, keep for me, by your grace, this holy resolution.

CHAPTER V.

CALVARY AND THE ALTAR.

If men would but think of Jesus, they would not offend Him; they would love Him. His patience, His mercy, His love, would soften the sinner's heart to sorrow for the past, to love for the future. Every mystery of the life of our Divine Lord reveals new secrets of the goodness of God to man; but the depths of love and mercy contained in His passion and death are fathomless. Men and angels will gaze with amazement for all eternity on the Victim of Calvary. The eternal Son of God a babe! the "Word was made flesh"—the eternal Son of God crucified! "Bowing down His head He gave up the ghost." If this great mystery was engraven on the hearts of mankind, the empire of Satan would totter to its foundation. We could not think of Jesus bleeding, Jesus dying, without hating sin, and in hating sin we begin to love. "There is nothing," says St. Augustine, "conduces more to salvation than always to think what the God-man has suffered for us." Could Jesus give more than His life for the salvation

of mankind? "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (*John*, xv. 13). Jesus has done more, He laid down His life for His enemies: "Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "died for us, even when we were sinners" (*Rom.*, v. 9).

The Passion of Christ is the soul of Christianity. It is the inexhaustible, infinite ocean that daily waters the Church of God, and imparts to her life and fertility, youth and beauty. It has been, and ever will be, the constant meditation of the saints. It made them saints. "He," says St. Bernard, "who devoutly meditates on the life and death of Jesus Christ, finds there abundantly all things he stands in need of." And again, the same saint says: "Nothing is more efficacious for curing the wounds of our conscience and purifying our souls, than continually to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus Christ." A God suffers and dies for man! In the garden of Gethsemani Jesus begins "to fear, and to be heavy," and to be "sorrowful and sad." "My soul is sorrowful even unto death" (*Matt.*, xxvi.). He falls upon His face flat upon the ground. Anguish, pain, and sorrow overwhelm the Redeemer. The blood is forced from His

sacred heart through all the pores of His sacred body; in the words of the Gospel, "His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." Sweet Jesus! All this for man, poor, sinful, ungrateful man! An angel consoles thee. May we console Thee by remembering Thy passion and loving Thee.

We do not intend to follow Jesus through all the stages of His passion. He was betrayed and sold. May we never betray and sell Him again by sin. In Pilate's hall the virginal flesh and blood of Jesus purpled and besprinkled the floor and walls, and was trampled on by the soldiers. May we never scourge the virginal flesh of Jesus by the sins of our flesh; or by sacrilege trample upon His precious blood. Jesus upon His bleeding shoulders carries the cross, laden with the sins of the whole human family, to the summit of Calvary's hill, there to consummate the sacrifice of man's redemption. The purple garment, which had stuck fast to the clotted blood on his sacred back and shoulders, is violently torn off; the wounds are reopened, the blood spurts out anew. Exquisite pain! But no sigh, no moan from Jesus! Placidly the Lamb lies

upon the cross: the victim, with eyes fixed on heaven, lies upon the altar. The savage executioners grasp the hand of the meek Jesus: on its palm is placed the rough, blunt nail: a strong arm, moved by a merciless heart, wields the hammer, stroke after stroke! and the nail, cutting, or rather breaking, through the flesh, sinews, muscles, and bones of Jesus, is deeply bedded in the wood of the cross! Dear Jesus, what exquisite suffering, what intense pain, what racking torture! Well did the prophet say, "They have dug my hands and feet, they have numbered all my bones." "From the sole of the foot to the top of the head, there is no soundness in Him" (*Isa.*, i. 6).

For three hours the Son of God hangs upon the cross, amid the insults, jeers, scoffs, and blasphemies of a wicked mob. Sweet Jesus! He looks down upon them, and says, "I thirst." Yes, I thirst for the souls of my children. This thirst was far more parching than that which dried up His divine lips and breast from the loss of blood.

Raising His dying eyes to heaven, He implores mercy for His executioners: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (*Luke*, xxiii. 34). O mercy worthy of God!

During these three hours the blood flows, drop by drop, from the bleeding wounds of Jesus; the last drop is about to flow. O supreme moment! The expectation and promises of four thousand years are about to be fulfilled; the human family to be redeemed; the empire of hell to be destroyed, and heaven to be opened. Supreme moment! The departed just in prison count each instant by years; the countless millions of blessed spirits are grouped round Calvary, counting every sigh, weeping (if indeed tears can bathe an angel's cheek) with their suffering, dying in God; the Holy Ghost is looking down; the Father is well pleased with his only begotten Son. The moment is come, the Sacred Heart opens wide, the last drop issues forth. "It is consummated." "Jesus, bowing down His head, gave up the ghost" (*John*, xix. 30), and MANKIND IS REDEEMED!

The eternal Son of God died upon the cross, in the most excruciating torments, to redeem sinful man. No wonder "the sun was darkened over the whole earth" (*Matt.*, xxvii. 45). A God dies! No wonder "the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the

rocks were rent." "And the graves were opened; and many of the bodies of the saints that had slept arose" (*Matt.*, xxvii. 51, 52). All nature was convulsed, and sympathized with the sufferings of the Son of God.

In the passion of Jesus Christ we find everything. When despair sits upon the brow of the sinner steeped in the deadly guilt of years, the passion of Jesus will turn despair into hope. No matter how deadly the dye of our guilt, no matter how enormous the crimes and sins of our lives, there is always mercy in the Blood of Jesus. "He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins" (*Isa.*, v.). One tear of Jesus would redeem the world, but He has shed His blood, nay even to the last drop. May this precious blood flow upon our souls and cleanse every stain of sin. The passion of Jesus is a balm for the wounded heart. "I found not," says St. Augustine, "in all my necessities a more efficacious remedy than the wounds of Christ." And Albertus Magnus used to say, "that a single tear, shed over our Lord's passion, was better than a year's fast on bread and water, with watchings and disciplines." The passion of Jesus not only gives hope to the despair-

ing, but softens the hardest hearts. When the poor sinner, turning to God, kneels with faith at the foot of the cross, the tear of sorrow glistens in his eye, his heart swells with contrition and repentance. Yes, the blood of Jesus can thaw the coldest ice and burst the flintiest rock. At the sufferings of the Son of God even inanimate nature was moved—the earth shook, the rocks split, the graves opened, the veil of the temple was rent, the sun was darkened, the dead arose. Shall, then, the heart of man, for whom alone Jesus suffered and died, remain unmoved, untouched?

At the foot of the cross the poor sinner conceives not only hope and sorrow, but love for Jesus. Mary Magdalene first wept, then loved. In sorrow and love she twined her arms round the tree of the cross, on which Jesus, her love, was dying. Jesus, give us sorrow and love like hers. Can we refuse to love Jesus when He suffers and dies through love for us? "Wherefore, let us love God," says St. John (1 *John*, iv. 19), "because God first loved us." Jesus will accept our poor hearts, though they are hardly worth giving Him: "Son, give me thy heart." Yes, suf-

fering Jesus! accept our hearts and our souls with their affections and faculties for ever. To use the words of St. Augustine (*Conf.*, ii. 16): "What kindles, urges, inflames, and drives me on to love Thee more than anything else, is the most ignominious and bitter death, which Thou, O good Jesus, didst endure for the work of our redemption. This alone, this altogether, easily claims for itself all our life, all our labor, all our devotion, and finally, all our love. This, I say, best excites, most sweetly solicits, most amply multiplies our devotion."

How many more holy things to be said of the passion! One thing more we cannot omit, the use of the Passion as intercessory prayer. It is recommended by the Church in so many ways. She has put her stamp upon it, by granting an indulgence of one hundred days to the following aspirations: "Eternal Father! I offer Thee the precious Blood of Jesus, in satisfaction for my sins, and for the wants of holy Church." What a holy thing to offer to God the Blood of Jesus for the conversion of poor sinners! In the *Life of St. Gertrude* we find our Lord Himself taught her this pious practice. St.

Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to offer, fifty times a day, the Blood of Jesus for the living and the dead. What a great thing to convert one sinner to Jesus! Do you wish it? Yes: then frequently say: Eternal Father! I offer Thee the precious Blood of Jesus, for the conversion of poor sinners; and on the day of judgment you will find yourself to be the instrument of the conversion of many. O glorious thing, to win one soul to the Sacred Heart of Jesus! "He," says the word of God, "who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (*St. James*, v. 20). And again, "They that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity" (*Daniel*, xii. 3). Let us repeat it: offer to God the Blood of Jesus for poor sinners, and you will save your own soul, and shine like a brilliant star for all eternity. We have said something of Calvary: let us turn to the altar.

On Calvary, as we have seen, a God is the priest, a God is the victim, giving infinite glory and making infinite atonement to an infinite God. But is not the altar the exact same? Let us hear the infallible Council of

Trent. In Sess. xxii. ch. 2, the holy Council says:—"That same Christ is contained and immolated (on the altar) in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross." "For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross."

In His Passion, Jesus was betrayed and sold by His own friend. Yes, the treason of His friend, the kiss of Judas, went straight to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But in the Blessed Sacrament, how often is not Jesus betrayed and sold by his friends too, by sacrilegious communions, which, like the kiss of Judas, directly wound the Sacred Heart of the Saviour! May God banish sacrilege from the Church of Jesus!

The Jews, filled with the fell spirit of hell, could not bear the presence of the Messiah, but in wild frantic rage cried out: "Away with Him, away with Him;" "crucify Him, crucify Him." "His blood be upon us and our children." But how often in the history of the Church, how often in these our own sad days, has not the same fell spirit inspired like rage and hatred against the same Messiah

present on our altars? Like the cruel Jews, how often have not the more wicked and cruel heretic and infidel cried out against Jesus on the altar: "Away with Him; away with Him."

Breathing this spirit of Satan, have not wicked men rushed into our churches? Have they not entered the awful sanctuary where the majesty of God resides? Have they not broken open the tabernacles where dwells Jesus—the "Holy of Holies?" and there have they not laid sacrilegious hands on the Babe of Bethlehem — Jesus in the Host? Have they not there, as far as in them lay, scourged and crucified again the Redeemer? Have they not thrown into the flames, and trampled under foot, like the Jews in Pilate's hall, the flesh and blood of Jesus? Dear Jesus! sweet Jesus! We believe in Thee, and love Thee, for these heretics and infidels. O patience and love of God! God divided the waters of the Red Sea to deliver His people. He sent a destroying angel to smite whole armies of the enemies of Israel. A hand from heaven wrote on the walls the death warrant of the king who dared to profane the sacred vessels of the temple. God

has saved, a thousand times over and over, His servants from death in every shape. But on the altar, as on the cross, there is no invisible hand, no destroying angel to smite the enemies of Jesus. Love has brought down Jesus into the flesh; love brings Him down daily on countless altars; and through love He will bear patiently, to the end of time, all insults, blasphemies, and sacrileges. May fervent Catholics, by their return of love, make reparation for all to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

We have said, how supreme the last moment of Jesus expiring on the cross; but the consecration at the adorable sacrifice of the mass, in the eyes of faith, is not less solemn and supreme; for there the same victim is mystically slain; the same Jesus, bowing down His head, gives up the ghost. The mysteries of the altar exceed, if we be allowed thus to speak, those of Calvary; for on the altar no angels are sent, as to the shepherds, to announce His birth; no miraculous star points to the sanctuary; no earthquake, no eclipse, no convulsion of nature, proclaim His death. On the altar, faith alone tells "the Word is made Flesh," and "it is consum-

mated"—Jesus is born, Jesus dies, all nature is silent.

Calvary and the altar! what holy thoughts they inspire! Before the cross and altar the saints have ever wept and prayed: there they have shed tears of sorrow for their own past faults, and for the heavier sins of their fellowmen. There they have learned love and sacrifice for Jesus' sake. There, with hearts big and full to overflowing with the holy emotions of gratitude and sorrow, love and zeal, they have made the generous resolve to consecrate their lives to the service of their Maker—to prayer and penance, labor and love; thirsting for the opportunity to give their lives, and shed their blood, for their Divine Saviour. May Jesus inspire our hearts with such holy thoughts.

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! it was for thy salvation, and that of all mankind, that Jesus died and shed His precious Blood on Calvary. This sacred Blood is thy only hope. Its value is as infinite as God Himself. In it there is "plentiful redemption" for all—Catholic and unbeliever, pagan and Jew.

RESOLUTION.

My Jesus! dying and thirsting for souls, I resolve to recite, frequently every day, and for the salvation of souls, for Thy sake alone, the following aspirations:—First: "Eternal Father! I offer Thee the precious Blood of Jesus in satisfaction for my sins, and for the wants of Holy Church." Secondly: "Eternal Father! I offer Thee the precious Blood of Jesus for the conversion of pagans, heretics, and sinners." Thirdly: "Holy Virgin! I beg of thee to offer to God the precious blood of Jesus, to prevent, in some part of the world, a mortal sin from being committed this day or this night."

CHAPTER VI.

THE REAL PRESENCE.

Thus far, Jesus in the Flesh and Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament has been our theme. Henceforward the Blessed Sacrament alone will be our subject. Though our object is devotion, and not controversy, and our little book is intended for the faithful alone—for

the children of the one true Church of Christ, the sheep of the one fold, "fed" by the one INFALLIBLE SHEPHERD, the Vicar of Jesus Christ; still a few reflections on the truth of the great dogma of the Real Presence cannot fail to enliven our faith and intensify our gratitude and love to God. In this age of bold infidelity, when the spirit of darkness stalks abroad to insult our holy religion; when wicked men, by sophistry and false reasoning, try to sap the very foundation of faith, and especially assail the doctrine of the Real Presence—the centre of all our love and all our affections—every Catholic should not only glory in his religion, but be able to give an account of the faith that is in him. Hence in this chapter we give, or rather only touch, a few of the proofs of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

How divine and holy are all the doctrines of the Catholic Church! When the philosopher analyzes the human heart, and examines the doctrines of our holy faith, he cannot fail to recognize one and the same Maker of both. He finds that the same hand that moulded the human heart, and breathed into it the breath of life, is the Divine Founder of

the Catholic Church. She alone satisfies the reason of the mind as well as the feelings of the heart. For instance, every man feels within himself a longing for certainty in matters of faith. In the Catholic Church alone this desire is satisfied by the doctrine of Infallibility, which disperses doubt and uncertainty; whilst the Protestant is "shifted about by every wind of doctrine."

Again, the Creator has filled the heart of man with loving affections for family and friends; and when the ties of family are severed by death, this affection is continued and increased towards the dear departed. How beautiful the doctrines of Purgatory and Communion of Saints! The Catholic can lift his hands in supplication to those in bliss, and whisper a prayer of relief for those in pain. Have we not all felt it? How happy the good child that follows fond parents beyond the grave, and helps them to the enjoyment of their God! But more cruel than death, and colder than the grave, is the Protestant doctrine. It snaps the connection between the living and the dead, and sternly forbids the children to help, or be helped by, the departed. But of all the articles of our

holy religion, the Real Presence of Christ on our altars is the most consoling. It is the perfection of God's work; the greatest—if, indeed, contrast be allowed—manifestation of God's love for man.

Section I.

The Doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The doctrine of the Catholic Church on this article of our holy faith is defined in the clearest and most precise terms in the Council of Trent (Sess. xiii. can. 1, 2), viz.: "That in the Sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist are contained, truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ." And again: "That (by consecration) the whole substance of the bread is changed into His body, and the whole substance of the wine into His blood." Such is the clear Catholic doctrine; while Protestants contend that Christ is present only in sign, or figure, or virtue; or, in other words, they deny the corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The proofs of the Catholic doctrine are deduced from various sources, viz., sacred Scrip-

ture, tradition, prescription, liturgies, etc., etc. Learned men have written volumes on each of these subjects. Our space and object will allow us to touch only on a few of these proofs.

Our first argument from the sacred Scriptures we divide simply into two parts: First, we will prove that Christ promised to give His real body and blood for our food and drink; secondly, that He fulfilled His promise, and gave His real body and blood.

In the Old Testament, the promises are contained in types, figures, and prophecies: in the New, they are expressed by Christ Himself. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament foretold the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, like that of the Incarnation. Thus God prepared the world for the great truth. "The law," says St. Paul (*Heb.*, x. 1), "had but the shadow of the good things to come."

St. Irenæus tells us, that the tree of life planted by the hands of God in the garden of Paradise was a figure of the Blessed Eucharist. The fruit of this tree preserved the freshness and vigor of perpetual youth—banished the decay of old age as well as death. It was the life of our first parents. So the

Blessed Eucharist is the real tree of life, planted by Christ in the garden of His Church, whose branches extend over the entire earth; whose shelter strengthens youth, and gives youth to old age; and whose sap (may I thus speak?) preserves the soul from everlasting death. "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

The sacrifice of Melchisedech points clearly to the great sacrifice of the New Law. "Melchisedech," says the holy Scripture (*Gen.*, xiv. 18), "the King of Salem, bringing forth bread and wine, for he was a priest of the Most High God." Nine centuries later, the Royal Psalmist, singing the praises of the Messiah, addressed Him in these words: "Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech" (*Ps.*, cix. 4). Thus, this sacrifice to God of bread and wine was an evident type of the great Victim of the Christian religion, offered under the appearance of bread and wine.

Again, the sacrifices of expiation were evident figures of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist: and how powerfully they convey to our minds the idea of the efficacy of the blood of redemption shed upon our altars?

We learn from the xvi. chap. *Levit.*, and also St. Paul to the *Hebrews*, that the high-priest, carrying the blood of the victim, entered alone once a year into the Holy of Holies, and there offered this blood to expiate the sins of the people. How vividly this brings to our minds the Christian priest in the Holy of Holies, offering, in expiation of the sins of the world, the blood of Jesus Christ, typified by the blood of calves and goats! How beautifully St. Paul (*Heb.*, ix. 13) expresses its efficacy! "If the blood of goats and oxen sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who, by the Holy Ghost, offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God."

The manna in the desert was another striking figure of the real presence. God in His mercy rained down this manna from heaven to feed His people, pressed by hunger and fatigue in their journey through the desert to the land of promise. On this earth we are all travelers, journeying through the desert of life to heaven, the land of promise. How often we sit down fatigued, exhausted by spir-

itual hunger, about to faint on the way; but in the Blessed Eucharist we have the real manna from heaven, the bread of angels, to give us strength, to cheer us on our journey to Paradise—the land of promise. "Your fathers," said the Redeemer (*John*, vi. 59), "did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."

Were not the "loaves of proposition" placed before the tabernacle, "on a table of satin-wood overlaid with pure gold," eloquent figures of the real presence of Jesus Christ in our tabernacles or ciboriums of silver and gold?

The Paschal Lamb! The very name of the Lamb of God on our altars! "Agnus paschæ deputatur." This Lamb was "without blemish;" His blood, sprinkled on the doors of the Hebrews, preserved them from the sword of the destroying angel who smote the children of Egypt. How eloquently this speaks of the true Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world! The Lamb, "unspotted and undefiled," whose blood, sprinkled on the doors of our souls, preserves us from the angel of everlasting death. "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (*John*, vi. 59).

What was the "corn of the elect and the wine springing forth virgins" of the prophet Zacharias (ix. 17) but the Blessed Eucharist, which is the life of the elect, and fills the Church of Christ with virgin spouses?

But how omit the testimony of Malachias (i. 10)? How clearly, in the far distant future, the prophet saw the Catholic priest saying mass at the altar! God, by the mouth of His prophet, said: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." Could anything be clearer? The Blessed Eucharist, or mass, is the clean oblation offered to God in every clime and every land, from the rising to the setting sun. Thanks be to God for the true faith of Jesus Christ.

Thus the Blessed Eucharist, like the Incarnation, was promised by God from the very beginning. Like a pencil of light in the far-distant horizon, it shone amidst darkness. Centuries rolled by: the pencil of light became more clear and distinct, until, breaking through darkness, twilight, and dawn, it shone

in broad daylight—in the meridian effulgence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverbs" (*John*, xvi. 29).

Section II.

Christ Himself promised the Blessed Eucharist in the Gospel of St. John, chap. vi.

In the first part of this chapter, up to the 26th verse, the Evangelist gives the details of the history of the great miracle wherein our Divine Redeemer fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. At the 26th verse, the Saviour addresses the multitude, confirms their faith in Him as God, promising another bread, having before His divine mind the Blessed Eucharist. At the 51st verse, He tells them clearly what this bread shall be. He says: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man,

and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

From these texts we prove that Christ meant a real eating of His real flesh, and a real drinking of His real blood: whilst Protestants contend that the words are to be taken in a figurative or metaphorical sense.

Now, the phrase, *to eat the flesh of a person*, when used figuratively, had a fixed, unvarying meaning among the people whom Jesus addressed. The phrase occurs in four passages of the Old Testament, and two of the New, and, besides, is current even to this day in the Oriental languages. Now, in all these passages, to eat the flesh of a person, means to injure or calumniate him. For instance, the

Psalmist says: "While the wicked draw near against me to eat my flesh" (*Ps.*, xxvii. 2). And holy Job says: "Why do you persecute me, and are not satisfied with (eating) my flesh" (xix. 12)? And so on with the other texts. Therefore, when our Lord used the words, he had no choice between the literal meaning and the mixed metaphorical sense; but this figurative meaning is absolutely absurd. For it would mean, unless you injure, calumniate, and offend me, you shall not have life in you! Hence it logically follows, that He used them in their clear literal sense of giving His real body and blood for our food and drink.

Add to this, that the Jews had an awful repugnance to drink the blood even of a clean animal. If, then, the words in question were used figuratively by our Blessed Saviour, they would have conveyed to the minds of his hearers a most repugnant and revolting image; whilst He could convey the same doctrine in simple, winning words: or, if a figure was to be used, a thousand other agreeable metaphors were at hand, which might have been adopted. No human teacher, if only wise, would express himself in the manner which Protestants

attribute to our Divine Lord. Hence we must conclude, that our Lord used these expressions in their literal sense, which is that of the Real Presence.

The Murmurs of the Capharnaites.

To understand the meaning of an author or speaker, we must consider the time and circumstances under which he wrote or spoke. Now in the present instance we are singularly happy; for all the circumstances supply an argument so forcible, that we are persuaded it would be impossible for a candid Protestant, who invokes the light of the Holy Ghost, and who reasons before God on these circumstances, not to bow down and adore Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist.

When our Lord had said: "The bread that I will give you is my flesh for the life of the world," the Gospel adds: "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" From this murmur, or interrogation, it is obvious that the Jews understood our Lord as using His words in their plain literal signification. Christ said to them: "I will give you my

flesh to eat;" and they ask: "How can you give us your flesh?" Now comes the issue: Were they right or were they wrong? If they were right in understanding the words literally, so are Catholics right and Protestants are in error. And here—blessed be God—there is not even a shadow of doubt. The divine lips of Jesus Christ Himself answer the question.

Before we give our Lord's conclusive reply, we have to premise two remarks. First: we have eleven passages in the New Testament where the hearers of Christ erroneously took His figurative expressions in a literal sense, and in all these eleven passages He corrects their mistake, though in some of them no great error would result from the mistake. For instance, Jesus said to His disciples (*John*, xi. 11): "Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth." Taking the words in their literal meaning, they said: "Lord, if he sleepeth he will be well." Jesus corrected the mistake, saying: "Lazarus is dead." Another example: When our Lord said to Nicodemus: "I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God;" Nicodemus, understanding the words literally, objected, saying:

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus instantly explains the words: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*John*, iii. 3). So also in the other passages where our Lord was misunderstood, He explained His meaning.

Secondly, we have three passages where our Lord's words were rightly understood in their literal meaning, and where His hearers murmured and objected. In these, instead of explaining away the literal meaning, he repeats the same thing in more emphatic terms. For instance, when our Redeemer said to the Jews: "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw it and was glad;" His hearers correctly took the words in their literal meaning, and murmured: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus repeats His words in more emphatic terms: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, before Abraham was made I am" (*John*, viii. 56). It follows, then, that Christ's constant practice was this: First, when He spoke figuratively, and was understood literally, in His reply

He always corrected the mistake. Secondly, when He spoke literally, and His auditors, understanding Him literally, murmured and objected, He repeated what gave offence in more emphatic language. Now let us bear in mind these two canons in Christ's reply to the murmurs of the Capharnaites.

The Redeemer's Reply.

From what we have said, the Jews understood our Lord's words literally, and murmured. According to His constant practice, He would have corrected their mistake if He spoke figuratively. Did He correct them? or did He confirm their manner of understanding His words? Never was there a more emphatic confirmation. In His answer, our Blessed Saviour repeats, no fewer than five times, the very same words, in emphatic confirmation of His doctrine: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." Could words be clearer? And again: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." "He that eateth my flesh and

drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." "He that eateth me, the same shall live by me" (*John*, vi.). Among the Jews there was no mistake, for the Gospel adds: "Many, therefore, of His disciples hearing it, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? . . went back, and walked no more with Him."

There was, then, no error: nothing to correct. Five times Jesus repeated that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood; and hence the argument is conclusive that in the Gospel of St. John the Redeemer promised the Real Presence of His Body and Blood in the Blessed Eucharist. Now to sum up these arguments. 1. We have seen that the type, figures, and prophecies of the Old Law clearly point to the Real Presence. 2. In the Gospel of St. John, if our Lord spoke metaphorically, when He spoke of *eating His flesh*, He should have used the words in the sense only which from the established rules of speaking they bore. But this would be absurd; hence He used them literally. 3. He would have selected the most repulsive and revolting figure to convey His heavenly doctrine, which would be unworthy of human, not to say Di-

vine wisdom. 4. The Jews understood Him literally; and so far from correcting their mistake, as was His constant practice, five times He repeated and confirms His previous words. 5. The Jews, even His own disciples, disgusted at these repeated confirmations, abandoned Him—"walked with Him no more," for "His hard sayings." Each argument in itself is strong and cogent; but all taken together, *must force irresistible conviction on the candid mind of the promises of the Real Presence.* With St. Peter, we cry out: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." "We have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (*John*, xi. 69).

Section III.

The Redeemer fulfilled His promise: proved from the words of institution.

"Whatever God has promised," says St. Paul (*Rom.*, iv. 20), "He is able to perform." We have seen that the Redeemer promised us His real body and blood. He has fulfilled His promise for He is God, to whom nothing is impossible. Let us briefly examine the proofs taken from the words of the institu-

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tion. The history of the institution of the Blessed Eucharist is narrated in substantially the same words by the three Evangelists and St. Paul. *St. Matthew*, (xxvi. 26) thus gives them: "And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke; and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: this is my body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks; and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins." These words constitute the impregnable bulwark of the Catholic doctrine. The Council of Trent (Sess. xiii. cap. 1) teaches that they prove the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Eucharist. The holy Council says: "After the blessing of the bread and wine, He (the Redeemer) testifies in express and clear words, that He gave them His own very Body and His own Blood."

The beautiful simplicity and clearness of the words of institution cannot fail to strike the mind of the candid reasoner. Christ says: "This is my body; this is my blood." The Catholic, in loving gratitude, bows down and says: "Yes, O Lord I believe it. It is your

body. It is your blood." Whilst the Protestant replies: "No, it is not your body; it is not your blood; but only a figure of your body and blood!" How evidently false, how disrespectful—shall I say blasphemous?—is this reply of the unbeliever to the Eternal Son of God. Hence our best argument consists in the bare repetition of these clear, sacred, and infallible words. Intrenched behind these words of our Blessed Saviour, the Catholic calmly awaits the attack of the enemy. The Protestant must prove the words cannot be taken literally—which nobody has ever yet done. Assuming the offensive, we shall prove that the words must be taken in their clear and literal meaning.

According to the admitted rules of hermeneutics, or interpretation, a text is to be taken in its literal meaning, except, firstly, the literal sense involves a repugnance or absurdity; or, secondly, the words themselves, either from their own natural meaning or convention (usus loquendi) imply or suggest a figure. Learned Protestants admit these laws. Now in the texts—This is my body; this is my blood—We are not forced to the figurative meaning by either of these two conditions.

In the first place, there is no repugnance or impossibility in the Real Presence. This is a question of pure philosophy. Philosophers of the first order, such as the celebrated Leibnitz, a Protestant, and the catholic Balmez, the glory of the nineteenth century have demonstrated that there is no intrinsic impossibility in the Real Presence. With God all things are possible (*Matt.*, xix. 26.) The same Christ who raised the dead to life, who changed water into wine, can by His omnipotence transmute bread and wine into His body and blood. The Christian who believes the Trinity and Incarnation will find no difficulty in the Blessed Eucharist. This is evident.

Secondly, the words themselves, either from their own nature or convention, do not imply a figure. Not from their own nature; for bread neither is, never has been, a figure or sign of human flesh. Not from convention or common consent; for there is not even a trace of it in the Scriptures. Hence it rigidly follows, that our Saviour could not have used the words in a figurative sense, but used them in their clear literal meaning.

Add to this another powerful reason de-

duced from the occasion—the solemn occasion of Our Lord's making his last will and testament. When any man is dying, making his last will and testament, does he use figures and metaphors? Far from it. He makes use of the simplest and clearest words to express his meaning. Now, our Blessed Lord was on the eve of His passion, pouring out the treasures of His love, bequeathing to all mankind the greatest legacy of love which Divine Wisdom could devise—a legacy that regarded millions in every clime and every land, from generations to generations, to the end of time. At this solemn moment, so much at stake, are we to suppose the God of infinite wisdom, in violation of the rules of common sense and human prudence, to have expressed Himself in obscure figurative language, thus confirming in error millions for whom, the following day, He was to shed His blood, even to the last drop? No; the contrary we are to expect; and could words be more simple than these: "This is my body; this is my blood"? Yes, O blessed Lord! we believe that the Blessed Eucharist contains Thy adorable body and Thy precious blood.

Overwhelmed by these conclusive argu-

ments, our adversaries had recourse to another objection. They contended that our Lord was obliged to use the verb "to be" or "is," for "represent;" for, they said, in the language in which he spoke there was no term to express "represent," or "signify," etc. This was a bold assertion and became for some time the great argument of the Protestant pulpit. But Catholic divines studied the Syro-Chaldaic language in which our Saviour spoke, and found no fewer than forty-five words to express "signify," or "represent," in that language. Never was defeat so signal, or victory so complete!

The Testimony of St. Paul.

St. Paul came after our Blessed Saviour. He confessed with the other apostles, who received the doctrine from the Divine lips of Jesus Christ Himself. As an inspired writer, his duty was to explain whatever might appear obscure in our Lord's words. Now what does St. Paul say? He gives the words of institution substantially the same as the three Evangelists (1 *Cor.* xi. 23), and confirms this doctrine by two convincing texts. He says (1 *Cor.* x. 16): "The cup of benediction

which we bless, is it not the partaking of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not partaking of the body of the Lord?" Here the Apostle calls the wine the blood of Christ, and the bread the body of the Lord. And again he says (1 *Cor.* xi. 27): "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself; not discerning the body of the Lord." Here, in painting the awful guilt of sacrilege, he again calls the Holy Eucharist the body and blood of the Lord. Hence St. Paul, so far from explaining away the "hard sayings" of his Divine Master, several times repeats the same words, and confirms the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the adorable Sacrament.

Now to sum up these various points, too briefly put. Firstly, we have seen that the words of institution are in themselves clear and evident; secondly, that neither the matter nor words, nor any convention, require or point to a figure; thirdly, that our Lord was making His last will and testament, and was

bound therefore to use clear, plain and intelligible language? fourthly, that He had forty-five easy words to express the figure, did He wish it; lastly, that St. Paul, coming after our Divine Lord, several times repeats and confirms the same doctrine. All these things, taken together, prove to demonstration that the Redeemer fulfilled His promise to give us His real body and blood; and the candid Christian must cry out with St. Thomas: "My Lord and and my God" (*John* xxi. 28).*

Section IV.

The Real Presence proved by prescription and tradition.

The proofs of the doctrine of the real presence deduced from prescription and tradition are no less convincing than those from the sacred Scriptures. We begin with prescription. We must necessarily be very brief. At the time of the so-called Reformation, all Protestants admit that the Universal Church —both Western and Eastern—believed the doctrine of the real presence. Now from this

* For a full development of these arguments, the reader is referred to Cardinal Wiseman's *Lectures on the Eucharist.*

fact alone we prove the doctrine must have been taught by Christ Himself. The doctrine of the real presence includes a sacrifice and sacrament of daily use among the faithful—their principal worship. The Protestant comes and says: "This doctrine was not taught by, or practised in, the early Church, but introduced afterwards." Before we give a direct reply to this falsehood, let us first remark that the assertion is blasphemous, involving our Saviour in contradiction; for, to say that at any time the Universal Church was in or taught error, is to assert that Jesus Christ was faithless to His sacred promise—"to be with His Church all days, even to the end of the world" (*Matt.* xxviii. 20); and that "the gates of hell should not prevail against her" (*Matt.* xvi. 18). Who would not blush to assert that the Redeemer was faithless to His sacred promises?

But to return to the direct argument. The Universal Church peaceably possessed the treasure of the doctrine of the real presence at the time of the Reformation. Then, on a sudden, heretics arose and asserted: "This doctrine was not always believed; a change has taken place; error has been introduced."

Now, evidently it is their duty, the obligation is imposed upon them, to prove when the change took place, when, and by whom, the error was introduced. Have they done so? No, never. No Protestant has ever yet answered, nor ever will answer, these questions. They cannot produce a single page of history either sacred or profane, that records this mighty change. They cannot tell the names of the impostors, in what country they lived, in what age they flourished.

Add to this the sensitive vigilance of the Sovereign Pontiffs, the bishops, and the pastors of the Church in every age. Like faithful sentinels posted on the watch-towers of the Church, at the very shadow of error or heresy they sounded the tocsin of alarm. Councils were convoked, innovators condemned, and the brand of the heretic stamped upon their foreheads, that the faithful might know and shun them. In ecclesiastical history, we have the name of every heresy that was broached from the dawn of Christianity to the present day. Not only can we tell the names of the heresiarchs, the country and age in which they lived, but we have the most minute details of the disputes, and their condemnation

by the Church of God. And this in matters not only of faith, but even of discipline; so vigilant at all times have been the guardians of the deposit of faith. And notwithstanding this, no Protestants can tell when, where, or by whom the all-important doctrine of the real presence, constituting the daily worship of the faithful, was introduced! Are we to believe that this great change took place, and that no alarm was raised, no vigilant pastor reclaimed, no trace was left on the page of history! Are we to believe that the Universal Church—pastors and people—retired to rest one night, believing in a figurative presence, and arose in the morning believing in a real, and then conspired, one and all, to deceive posterity, and not leave a single trace of the change in the records of history! Is not such an hypothesis absurd and impossible? Hence it follows that no such change was ever made, no such error ever introduced. The doctrine the Church taught and believed at the Reformation, the same she taught and believed in every age, from century to century, to the times of the Apostles, and therefore received from the divine lips of Jesus Christ Himself the holy doctrine of the Real Presence.

Section V.

The Real Presence proved from tradition.

In our last argument we acted on the defensive. We challenged our adversaries to prove that a change took place in the teaching of the Church regarding the real presence. They failed. No Protestant has ever yet proved it. We now take the offensive, and prove that not only was no change introduced, but show from the clearest testimony of the fathers that the Church believed in every age the holy dogma of the Real Presence. This leads us to our last argument—Tradition. The student of ecclesiastical history well knows that there existed among the early Christians what is called the "Discipline of the Secret." This discipline enjoined the most inviolable secrecy about the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, even to catechumens. St. Augustine says: "If you ask a catechumen if he believes in the Incarnation, he would make the sign of the cross to show that he believes. If you ask whether he believes in the Eucharist, he does not know what you mean" (*Tract* xi. *in Joann.*). The object was to save this august and awful mystery of love and reverence from

the sneers and blasphemies of the pagans. Still we have fathers in every age to attest the doctrine.

We have in the first century the testimony of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who sealed his faith with his blood in the Colosseum of Rome. He says (*Epist. ad Smyrneum*, c. vii.): "They (the heretics of his time) abstain from the Eucharist, because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father raised from the dead." What a glorious testimony to our holy faith! Eighteen centuries have rolled by, burying in ruin the mighty empire of Rome. To-day the Christian, with tears of gratitude, kisses the cross planted on the very spot where the fearless martyr professed Christ before one hundred thousand pagan spectators. All have passed away; but the faith of St. Ignatius and of Rome in the real presence still lives.

St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, who flourished in the fourth century, says: "Since Christ Himself, therefore, said of the bread, This is my body, who shall dare doubt it? And since He declares, This is my blood, who shall doubt it, and say it is not His blood?

By His power in Cana of Galilee, He once changed water into wine; and shall He not be thought worthy of belief in changing wine into His blood? . . . Wherefore, with full confidence, let us take the body and blood of Christ; for in the form or figure of bread His body is given to us, and in the form or figure of wine His blood is given to us. . . . Judge not by the senses, but let faith confirm you. What appears bread is not bread, but the body of Christ; what appears to you wine, is not wine, but the blood of Christ" (*Mustag.*, cat. 4). Let us ask, could the doctrine be expressed in words more clear, plain, and simple?

St. Gregory, of Nyssa, also of the fourth century, says: "I, therefore, in like manner rightly believe that bread, which is sanctified by the Word of God, is changed into the body of God the Word" (*Orat. Catech.*, c. xxxvii.). We might produce many passages from St. Cyril, of Alexandria, St. Chrysostom, etc., but these quotations sufficiently show what had been the faith of the Eastern or Greek Church.

Let us now cite a few of the Latin fathers. St. Justin, of the second century, says: "We do not take these gifts (the Holy Eucharist)

as common bread and wine, but we believe them to be the flesh and blood of that Jesus Incarnate" (*Apo.* i. n. 66). Tertullian, of the third century, says: "The bread which Christ took and distributed to His disciples, He made His body, by saying: 'This is my body.'" And again: "The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be fattened with God" (*Lib. de Resurrec.*, c. viii.). St. Ambrose says (*Lib. de Init.*, c. ix.): "When we offer sacrifice, Christ is present, Christ is sacrificed." . . . . "The body which we consecrate is of the Virgin." . . . . "It is truly the flesh of Christ, which was crucified and buried." St. Augustine says, at communion even "the very wicked eat the very flesh of Christ and drink His blood" (*Serm.* lxxi. *de Verb. Dom.*). And again he says: "Oh! venerable dignity of priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of Mary, the Son of God becomes incarnate" (*in Ps.* xxvii.). We might quote St. Irenæus, of Lyons, St. Cyrian, of Carthage, St. Jerome, and many others; but the passages produced evidently prove that the Latin fathers of the first centuries believed, as we now do, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The Irish Fathers.

Although we have already gone far beyond the limits of our plan, still we know the heart of the Irish reader will dilate with gratitude to God, when he reads a few passages of the tradition of our own dear Irish Church—the Church of St. Patrick, St. Brigid, and countless Irish saints. The Irish Church! how sweet the very name! dearer to us than life; for which our forefathers gave up all—nay, shed their blood.

The learning of modern scholars has brought to light many valuable documents in proof of our holy faith, and especially of the doctrine of the Real Presence. First, we have a valuable manuscript called the Stowe Missal, according to the best Irish scholars not later than the sixth century. In this missal we find a mass for the dead, for the living, mass of apostles, mass of virgins; and the greater part of the canon is word for word the same as the Roman Missal we use to-day. Is this like Protestant doctrine? Thus the Irish priest, at God's altar, uses to-day the same prayers as his sainted fathers used thirteen centuries ago!

Secondly, we have another manuscript, called the Bobbio Missal, given by our great Irish saint and apostle, St. Columbanus, who flourished in the sixth century, to his Irish disciples in Italy. In this missal the canon of the mass is substantially the same as in the Roman. The prayers in this book clearly prove the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist. Let us give one example. Of our Divine Lord it says: "By participating of whose flesh we are strengthened, and by drinking whose blood we are cleansed." Could Catholic doctrine be expressed more clearly? We will give but one more illustration.

The lamented late Eugene O'Curry translated from the ancient Gaelic a little treatise called "An Exposition of the Ceremonies of the Mass"—a very un-Protestant name, no doubt! It belonged to the fifth or sixth century. We find in it these remarkable words: "Another division of that pledge, which has been left with the Church to comfort her, is the body of Christ and His blood, which are offered upon the altars of the Christians: the body which was born of Mary the Immaculate Virgin, and which was crucified by the unbelieving Jews: . . . and which arose after

three days from death, and sits upon the right hand of God the Father in heaven, in glory and dignity." Could any Catholic bishop of this day express our holy faith in clearer terms? Who is not struck by these emphatic words: "*The very body that was born of the Immaculate Virgin, and was crucified by the unbelieving Jews*"? How like the words of St. Augustine, of Africa: *Oh! venerable dignity of priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of Mary, the Son of God becomes Incarnate*" (*in Ps.* xxvii.).

In the lives of our great national saints, we find clear proofs of the same holy doctrine. To begin with St. Patrick, our illustrious Apostle. The two fair virgin daughters of King Leoghaire said to him: "Give us the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, that we may be freed from the corruption of the flesh, and may see our Spouse, who is in heaven." "Then St. Patrick celebrated mass, and both daughters of the king approached the communion with great hope and perfect faith, and when they had communicated they immediately rested in peace" (*Probus, Tr. Th.*, p. 58). When the hour of death approached, St. Patrick, like all his children to

this day, fortified his soul with the holy communion, or viaticum. We read in his life: "When the hour of death approached, he received the sacrament from the Bishop Tassach: it was at the admonition of the angel Victor he received the viàticum of eternal life." (*Vita Trip.*). St. Benignus, the beloved disciple of St. Patrick, prepared for death thus: "The man of God, seeing that the time of his dissolution was at hand, sent for St. Jarlath, and received most devoutly from his hand the earnest and pledge of eternal happiness, the body of the Lord, and thus prepared himself for death, and for his entrance to his heavenly country" (*Vita*, c. xviii.).

One more illustration. In the life of St. Brigid, the "Mary of Erin," dear to every Irish heart, we read: Immediately before her death, "she received the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, from the most pure hand of St. Nennidh, as she herself had predicted" (*Trias Thaum.*, p. 559).

We might cite many other authorities from the venerable tradition of our holy Irish Church, but the passages produced clearly

prove the faith of our forefathers in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Will not the Irish heart exult in holy joy and thanksgiving to God, that in the darkest midnight of persecution the lamp of faith still burned, and that after centuries of unparalleled trials and sufferings, we to-day possess the very same faith that fourteen hundred years ago St. Patrick preached to our fathers?

Hence it is clear that the faith of St. Patrick in Ireland was the same as that of St. Augustine in Africa, St. Cyril of Asia, St. Justin of Rome. Indeed, so strong and clear are the testimonies of both the Greek and Latin fathers in favor of the Catholic doctrine, that many Protestants candidly confess that tradition is opposed to them, and hence appeal to the sacred Scriptures against the Fathers. This confession in plain terms amounts to this—that the written word of God is in contradiction to His unwritten Word—tradition; that, notwithstanding the promises of Christ to be always with His Church, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against her, for fifteen hundred years the Universal Church was enveloped in the midnight darkness of error and idolatry, until

the light of the Reformation dawned, and the light of the Gospel shone upon the immortal apostates, Luther, Calvin, Henry the Eighth, and other notorious champions of Protestantism! Surely such a Church could not be the chaste spouse of Jesus the Lamb, to sanctify and beautify which He shed His precious blood!

Proscription, therefore, and the tradition of the Church in every age, are in accordance with the teaching of St. Paul on the dogma of the real presence. St. Paul confirmed the same doctrine contained in the sacred words of institution, narrated by the three Evangelists. The words of institution fulfil the promise made by the Redeemer in the Gospel of St. John, as also the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament. All these taken together irresistibly force upon the candid mind the conviction of the truth of the holy dogma, so clearly defined by the Council of Trent, "that in the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist are contained, truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ."

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! that thou "mayest live for ever," and "be raised up on the last day," Jesus Christ has given His body and blood for thy food and drink. Here on earth thou dost possess a treasure, than which heaven itself has nothing more precious or holy. God Himself, Jesus Christ, is thine. O sacred mystery! O holy faith!

RESOLUTION.

My Jesus! ever present in the most holy sacrament; my Jesus! "Tree of Life," "Manna of Heaven," "Paschal Lamb," "Bread of Angels," "Wheat of the elect, and Wine springing forth virgins;" in gratitude for one of Thy sweetest and choicest blessings—the grace of a firm faith in the Real Presence—I resolve, every day of my life, to thank Thee; and, secondly, daily to pray for final perseverance in this holy faith, and for the conversion of heretics, that they too may love and believe in Thee, Jesus, in the Holy Eucharist. Sacred Heart of Jesus! watch over my poor resolutions.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADORABLE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

The dogmatic proofs put forward in the last chapter have, we are fully conscious, but imperfectly dealt with the points discussed. Space obliged us, more or less, to sacrifice, clearness. Devotion, as we before remarked, not controversy, is our aim; to try to warm and increase, by the grace of God, love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in the hearts of those who believe. We now come to the adorable sacrifice of the altar—the Mass Well may we distrust ourselves in presuming to write about this "tremendous mystery." Let us invoke God's help in proceeding with our humble task.

Sacrifice is an external act of supreme religious worship given to God alone. In our hearts we adore and praise God; but by sacrifice we pay external outward homage to the Deity. We confess God the Sovereign Lord and Master of all creation—of life and of death. We profess our entire subjection to Him, and total dependence on His gracious Providence. The light of reason, and the

laws of nature engraven by God on the human heart, point out sacrifice as an essential part of the worship of the Supreme Being. Hence we find that all nations, however barbarous, adored the Deity, whether true or false, by sacrifice. In the true faith, from the beginning of the world to the end, sacrifice has never ceased, and never shall cease.

In the Old Testament, the patriarchs worshipped the true God by sacrifice. Witness that of Abel (*Gen.* v.); of Noah (*Gen.* viii.); of Melchisedech (*Gen.* xiv.); of Abraham (*Gen.* xv.); as also of holy Job, David, Solomon, and many others. The sacrifices of the old law consisted chiefly of living creatures, such as lambs, oxen, goats, etc., and sometimes of inanimate things, such as fine flour, oil, cakes, etc., and the bread and wine of Melchisedech. These sacrifices had no intrinsic value of themselves. St. Paul calls them "poor and weak elements," incapable of themselves of cancelling sin or conferring grace. "It is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sins should be taken away" (*Heb.* x. 4). "Shall I, said the Lord, eat the flesh of bullocks, or shall I drink the blood of goats?" "With burnt-offerings thou shalt not be de-

lighted" (*Ps.* xlix. 13; i. 18). They were but mere types and figures of the great sacrifice of the New Law, and from this alone they derived all their value and became pleasing to God. The Victims slain, and the blood offered on the altar, were types of the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary, and of the unbloody one of Jesus on the altar. On Calvary the Victim of infinite value, Jesus Christ, was slain; His blood offered up in atonement, and all mankind redeemed.

The mass! what is the mass? The mass, in one word, is the very same sacrifice as that of the Cross. The High Priest in the mass is the same Jesus Christ; the Victim offered up in the mass the same Jesus Christ. The same precious blood is offered in atonement on the Cross and on the altar. The mass is not a simple representation; it is the essence, the truth, and reality of Calvary. The Council of Trent says (Sess. xxii. c. 2): "The same Christ is contained and immolated [on the altar] in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross." "For the Victim is one and the same; the same now offering Himself by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself

on the Cross." The only difference is the manner of offering. On the Cross, Jesus offered His blood, and actually died; on the altar the same Jesus offers the same blood, and mystically dies; that is, His death is represented by the separate consecration of the bread and wine, which denotes the separation of His sacred blood from His body. The sacrifice of Calvary is the infinite ocean of redemption: the sacrifice of the mass is the application of that of Calvary to the souls of men. In the mass we have a standing memorial of the death of Christ. The memory of His passion is daily renewed, and the merits of His blood are applied to our souls. The Victim slain is of infinite value—Jesus Christ Himself. Infinite is the sanctity of the High Priest Jesus Christ, who, as St. Paul says (*Heb.* vii. 26), "is holy, innocent, without spot, separated from sinners, and elevated above the heavens;" and infinite glory is given to the adorable Trinity. The mass is the very soul of the Christian religion; the most sublime and august mystery of our holy faith; the most sacred function that can be performed on earth. "We must needs confess," says the Council of Trent, "that no other work can be

performed by the faithful so holy and divine as this tremendous mystery, wherein the life-giving Victim, by which we were reconciled to the Father, is daily immolated on the altar by priests" (Sess. xxii.). Would to God that we were all penetrated by these sacred words when we attend the celebration of the divine mysteries!

The great sacrifice of the mass will end only with the end of time. At the Last Supper, when the Redeemer celebrated the first mass, "gave His body and His blood for the remission of sins," He ordained His disciples priests of the New Testament, and commanded them and their lawful successors to the end of time to offer the same holy sacrifice. "Do this," says Christ, "in remembrance of me" (*Luke*, xxii. 19). That is, as St. Paul explains it, to show forth His death till His second coming (1 *Cor.* xi. 26). St. Paul again proves, in emphatic words, that the priesthood of Christ shall never end. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech" (*Heb.* vii. 21).

The prophet Malachi had foretold, long before St. Paul, that this sacrifice would last for

ever. He says in words the most beautiful: "I have no pleasure with you, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will not receive a gift of your hands: for from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts" (i. 10). The Protestant Church, which has neither priest, nor victim, nor altar, nor oblation, can not pretend to fulfil this prophecy. She has left the fold of Christ, the bark of Peter, and is in the way of error. But in the Catholic Church, built upon the rock of Peter, whose fair face neither error, nor heresy, nor old age has ever sullied; the Catholic Church, the virgin spouse of Christ, ever ancient and ever new; in her ever have been, and ever shall be, altar and sacrifice: in her, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, the Name of the Lord shall be great; and on countless altars, on behalf of millions and millions of souls, the clean oblation of the sacrifice of the Mass shall be offered to the Lord of Hosts.

The Saints on the Mass.

It will edify the pious reader to transcribe a few of the numberless sayings of God's servants, to show how they drank in sanctity at the fountain of salvation, and how sublime and exalted were their ideas of the mysteries of the altar. St. Augustine says, "that Jesus Christ, though omnipotent, could give nothing more than His Body and blood." St. Thomas of Aquin says, that the mass "is not only the greatest of all God's miracles, but it is an abridgment of all the wonders He has ever wrought." St. Bonaventure says: "The mass is a compendium of all God's love, and of all His benefits to men" (*De Instit.* c. ii.). St. Francis of Sales called the mass "a mystery which comprises the entire abyss of Divine love" (*Philot.* c. xiv.). St. Chrysostom says: "The holy sacrament of the altar is the treasure of all God's benignity." Hence St. Liguori concludes, "that all the honors which angels by their homages, and men by their virtues, penances, and martyrdoms, and other holy works, have ever given to God, could not give Him as much glory as a single mass" (*Selva*). The reader will excuse a long

quotation from "*The Hidden Treasure*" of St. Leonard of Port Maurice. He says: "The mass is the sun of Christianity, the soul of faith, the centre of the Catholic religion, the grand object of all her rites, ceremonies, and sacraments; in a word, it is the condensation of all that is good and beautiful in the Church of Christ." Again he says: "The mass is the miracle of miracles, the wonder of wonders." O treasure inestimable! O treasure beyond all human comprehension!" "The mass," he concludes, "is the sun of our holy religion, which dissipates the clouds and restores serenity to the heavens. It is the celestial rainbow that stills the tempest of divine justice. For my part I am persuaded that, if it were not for the holy mass, the world would have long since tottered from its foundations, crushed beneath the enormous weight of its many accumulated iniquities. The mass is the ponderous and powerful supporter on which the world rests—which keeps it from falling into horrid chaos" (p. xiii.). "When the priest," says the *Imitation of Christ*, "celebrates, he honors God, rejoices the angels, edifies the Church, helps the living, obtains rest for the dead, and

makes himself partaker of all that is good" (c. v.).

Such is the adorable sacrifice of the mass, as taught us by the Word of God and the writings of His Saints. If Christians but meditated on these great mysteries, and realized in their souls what faith teaches, in what esteem, love, and reverence they would hold the holy mass! They would regard it as the greatest blessing and privilege of their lives to be allowed to assist at mass. They would never omit even one opportunity of so doing. And with what devotion, piety, reverence, and awe they would join the angels round the throne of Jesus Christ! May Jesus inspire us all with this lively faith!

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! divine faith teaches thee that there is nothing more valuable, more holy, more divine, than the adorable sacrifice of the mass. To secure heaven for thee, Jesus on the altar, as on Calvary, is the High Priest and Victim shedding His blood for the remission of thy sins.

RESOLUTION.

Divine Jesus! Victim on the altar the same as on Calvary; infinite in value and merits; believing what faith teaches regarding the "tremendous mysteries of the altar," I resolve, by Thy holy grace, to value and esteem Thy holy sacrifice in accordance with this divine faith; and to have the greatest confidence to obtain at all times of the Almighty Father, through the merits of the adorable sacrifice of His Son in the mass, all graces and blessings for myself and the Church of God. Almighty Father! through the merits of Jesus on the altar grant me grace to keep my resolution.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ADORABLE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

SECTION I.

The Four Ends for which every Mass is said.

UNLESS we have a just idea of the mass, and a lively faith in the great mystery, we shall never appreciate the blessings of hearing mass, nor assist at it as we ought. The An-

gelic Doctor teaches that we owe to God four infinite debts. The mass adequately pays the four; and for these four debts or ends every mass is celebrated.

The First End.

Supreme honour, perfect homage, sovereign adoration, infinite praise, belong to the Majesty of Almighty God. How pay this debt? Of ourselves, what have we to offer? What is all creation in the sight of the Omnipotent? Poor miserable creatures! we depend on God for the very air we breathe. But in the holy mass we have all. The mass pays to God perfect homage—sovereign, infinite adoration. Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word made Flesh, humbles Himself to the Holy Trinity in the most profound manner by lying a victim on the altar. The Divinity imparts infinite value to each act and humiliation of the Humanity, and both are concealed under the forms of bread and wine. A God is offered to God! By the holy sacrifice, therefore, we pay to the Almighty the first debt we owe. Infinite goodness and love of Jesus! St. Leonard exclaims—and let us repeat it over and over again, since it never can be too deeply graven

on our memories—"Certainly, certainly, by hearing holy mass with proper dispositions, we offer unto our God homage and honour that is infinite." And concludes: "O blind world, when wilt thou open thine eyes to a truth so grand, so important? (*Hidden Treasure*, p. 19.)

Second End.—The Mass a Sacrifice of Infinite Thanksgiving.

The second debt we owe to God is to thank Him, as He deserves, for all benefits He has bestowed upon us. The gifts of grace and nature, so lavishly showered upon us by the bountiful hand of God, are countless– the gifts of soul and body, senses, reason, health, nay, life itself; the graces of sacraments and sacrifices, His patience, providence, and mercy to us; in a word, the merits of the life and death of Jesus made over, so to speak, on us. How thank God as He deserves, and as we ought, for all these and numberless other favours? What have we to offer? Nothing of ourselves, but everything in the mass. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" cries the Royal Psalmist; and seeing with prophetic eyes the holy

sacrifice, answers: "I will take the chalice of the Lord" (*Ps.* cxv.)—that is, I will offer Him the adorable sacrifice of the mass, which is of infinite value, and by which I can thank God as He deserves for all His countless favours and blessings. "Jesus Christ," says the Apostle (*Heb.* x. 4), "offered Himself for us to God, to be an oblation and victim of sweet odour." The Blessed Sacrament is emphatically called the Eucharist, which means "thanksgiving." A holy writer concludes: "O great and most loving God! would that each of us had countless tongues, to return Thee infinite thanks for this inestimable treasure of the holy mass, with which Thou hast enriched us."

The Third End.—The Mass is a Sacrifice of Infinite Atonement or Satisfaction.

The third great debt we owe to God is to satisfy His justice for our sins. Our sins! How countless and enormous! "The just man falls seven times in a day." How often we sinners! How many shall find their sins more numerous than the very hairs upon their heads! How many shall find their first mortal sin in the very morning of life, at the first

full use of reason; and year after year only added crime to crime, guilt to guilt. And yet without true repentance there is no salvation. "Unless you do penance," says the Redeemer, "you shall all likewise perish" (*Luke* xiii. 3). Where shall we find this repentance, this sorrow and pardon for our sins? At the Cross and at the altar. On Calvary Jesus Christ by His death "blotted out the handwriting that was against us, fastening it to the Cross." He satisfied the justice of His Father. All the merit of our repentance flows from the death of the Redeemer. On the altar, the very same blood that was shed on Calvary is offered up. When instituting the holy sacrifice, Jesus said: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (*Matt.* xxvi. 28). On the altar is "the Lamb standing as it were slain." Jesus offers His death and blood for the salvation of the world. The guilt and enormity of our sins need not cast us into despair. The blood of Jesus is sufficient to satisfy for the sins of a million of worlds. "With Him is plentiful redemption" (*Ps.* cxxix.). "He," says St. John (I. ii. 2), "is the propitiation for our sins;

not only for ours, but for those of the whole world."

Through the merits, therefore, of the holy sacrifice of the mass we are sure to obtain from the Almighty true sorrow and repentance—"a meek and contrite heart which God will not despise." St. Chrysostom says that the angels always pray for us, especially during the holy mass. St. Augustine says: "Whoever hears mass devoutly shall receive great strength to avoid the commission of mortal sin, and shall likewise obtain remission of all his venial sins." "O thrice holy mass," concludes St. Leonard, "which ennobles us with the liberty of the Son of God, and satisfies for all the penalties which our sins deserve" (p. 21).

Fourth End.—The Mass is a Sacrifice of Infinite Supplication or Impetration.

The fourth great debt we owe to God is to supplicate Him constantly in order to obtain of Him all graces and blessings we stand in need of. As without God's preserving hand we could not exist one instant, and the same Will that created us preserves us; so, also, without God's holy grace we cannot perform

one supernatural act, nor conceive one good thought, nor advance one step on the road that leads to life everlasting. "Without me," says Christ, "you can do nothing" (*John* xv. 5). And St. Paul adds: "We are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (II. *Cor.* iii. 5).

Our wants, temporal and eternal, are countless: graces to repent of our many sins; graces to sin no more; graces to live in His love and die in His friendship; the grace of final perseverance. In the holy sacrifice of the mass Jesus obtains all for us. On our altars, where His death and passion are represented and renewed, Jesus obtains of His Father all graces and blessings we need for soul and body. Jesus is the "beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased;" and "is heard on account of His own reverence." In the holy mass, Jesus Himself is our advocate as well as our High Priest. He presents our wants and petitions to His Father, and with the petitions His precious blood as a price to obtain them. The Church ends every prayer, and asks everything, "through our Lord Jesus Christ," because in Jesus we have

everything. "He that spareth not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all, things" (*Rom.* viii.). St. Jerome says: "Assuredly the Lord grants all the favors for which we petition Him in the mass, provided they be suitable to us; and, what is far more admirable, He very often grants us that for which we do not petition Him, provided we place no obstacle to His holy designs." "O thrice blessed mass!" adds St. Leonard, "thou art the exhaustless mine of all our good" (p. 28). We shall conclude this section by a passage from the infallible decrees of the Council of Trent, (c. ii.): "The holy Synod teaches that this sacrifice (the mass) is truly propitiatory, and by means thereof this is effected, that we obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid. For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof, and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins. Wherefore, not only for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those who are departed in Christ, and who are not yet fully purified, (mass) is rightly offered, agreeably to a tradition of the

Apostles." Canon iii. defines: "If any one saith that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving, or that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the Cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice, or that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other penalties; let him be anathema.

Section II.

How to hear Mass devoutly.

We cannot hear mass devoutly unless we have a just idea of what the mass is, and a lively faith in the divine mystery. Thus far this has been our object—to enliven the faith of our pious reader, and fix the eyes of his soul on the Lamb bleeding and dying on Calvary and on the altar. What infinite treasures of Divine mercy and love! With St. Paul we must exclaim: "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God!" (*Rom.* xi. 23). And with St. John: "The Lamb that is slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction. He hath

redeemed us to God in His blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" (*Apoc.* v. 12). How can we give to the Lamb this honor and glory and benediction? By hearing devoutly all the masses we can!

There are various methods of hearing mass devoutly. Each person is left to his free choice to select the method most agreeable to his devout inclinations and capacity—that which he finds, from experience, best excites him to fervor and piety. We suggest three, taken from pious writers, that the reader may choose what best suits his devotion.

First Method.

The first method is to employ the whole time of mass in reading our prayer-book; that is, to accompany all the actions and prayers of the priest with the most profound attention, reciting suitable vocal prayers, uniting the fervor and attention of our souls with the accents of our lips. This is doubtless an excellent method of hearing mass, and especially for those who cannot meditate, or who know not how to meditate, and who find from experience that they become distracted when they take their eyes off the prayer-book.

Second Method.

The second method is, to occupy the whole time of the mass in meditation and pious affections of the soul. Those who observe this method use no book, read nothing. With eyes of faith they behold Jesus bleeding and dying on the altar, as on Calvary. They spend the whole time of the mass in devout contemplation, in interior recollection, in meditating the sacred mysteries of our Blessed Lord's passion and death, and in acts of sorrow for sin, love of God, and other pious affections. They assist at mass in the same spirit as the Blessed Virgin, St. John, St. Mary Magdalene, standing at the foot of the Cross. They see Jesus dying for sin; they weep over their own; Jesus gives them the tears of true sorrow. They see Jesus dying through love; they love Him; Jesus gives them true charity. They know that sin offends Him; they beg the grace never to offend Jesus more. God alone sees and counts the number of holy thoughts and acts which divine grace operates in their souls during one mass heard in this most holy manner.

Third Method.

The third method is to unite with the priest in offering the holy sacrifice for the four great ends for which every mass is said. This method, pious writers say, is, if not the most perfect, at least most in accordance with the spirit of the Church and the ends of sacrifice. St. Thomas teaches that the mass is the most efficacious way of paying to God the four great debts we all owe Him.

Let us here make a remark of great importance. Although it is true that the priest alone, as the officiating minister, offers the holy sacrifice—he alone consecrates and celebrates—still it is equally true that the sacrifice is offered for all and in the name of all. The people present can and ought to join the priest, and offer the mass for themselves and their intentions. The priest reminds the congregation of this; for after the offertory he turns to the people and says: "Pray, brethren, that mine and your sacrifice may be pleasing to God the Father Omnipotent." All, then, share in the mass, and ought to join with the priest in offering it to God.

How, then, do this? With God's holy

grace it is very easy. Divide the time of mass into four distinct periods, in order to be able to think on the four great ends of the holy sacrifice. In the first period, say from the beginning of the Gospel, we can pay the first great debt. Acknowledging the abyss of our own nothingness, having nothing worthy of heaven, we can offer the mass, the Victim on the altar, the humiliations of Jesus, in adoration, praise, homage, and supreme worship to the Almighty Father.

In the second period of time, which may be from the Gospel to the Canon, we can pay the second great debt. We can call to mind the countless gifts, graces, and blessings we have received from the hands of God during our whole lives—creation, redemption, preservation, the true faith, the sacraments and sacrifices of the true Church, preservation from hell, which our sins deserved a thousand times, God's mercy and patience with us, His divine Providence over us. How many the hidden graces we know nothing of! Blessed be God a thousand times by all creatures, at every instant, that we have the means to thank Him as He deserves for all His infinite graces and blessings. We offer Him in the

mass the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world. The Almighty Father is satisfied—our debt is paid!

The third period of time, which may be from the Canon to the Consecration, may be occupied in paying the third great debt—atonement for our sins. We call to mind our numberless sins—sins of thought, word, and deed, sins of omission, the sins of "our youth and our ignorances," "our hidden sins and the sins of others." When we examine our souls in the light of God's grace, what a mountain of sin rises up before the eyes of the soul! But where find atonement? All the blood the martyrs ever shed could not of itself wash out one venial stain; but one drop of the blood of Jesus, shed on Calvary or the altar, is sufficient to atone for the sins of a thousand worlds! During mass, then, we can offer to the Eternal Father the precious blood of Jesus for our sins, and through the merits of His passion and death, renewed on the altar, beg the tears of true sorrow and sincere repentance for our offences. Through the merits of the blood of the Lamb, we shall obtain perfect contrition, true conversion—the contrite and humble heart which heaven never despises.

In the fourth period, which may be from the Consecration to the Communion or end of mass, we pay the last great debt, by supplicating the Almighty for all the graces and blessings we need. We want everything, and of ourselves we can get nothing; all must come through Jesus. We want at every moment strength to conquer, not only the devil and the world, but even ourselves. Through the mass we can obtain all. In the mass we offer to the Father His Divine Son, our Advocate and Mediator, and by His merits we obtain pardon for the past and grace for the future. We beg the grace of a holy life, happy death, and final perseverance. We offer to the Almighty the blood of Jesus for the conversion of pagans, heretics, infidels, and sinners. We supplicate heaven for our holy Father the Pope, for the wants of the Universal Church, and for our own dear Irish Church: and, finally, we offer the superabundant merits of Christ for the relief of those in pain—the poor suffering souls in purgatory. When the priest communicates, all should communicate spiritually. The advantages of spiritual communion we shall explain hereafter in a separate section.

Such are the three methods of hearing mass devoutly. Each person can select what best suits his piety and capacity. If all Catholics adopted any one of those ways, what treasures of graces they would draw down from heaven on their souls! What pious thoughts the Holy Ghost Himself would excite in their hearts! How holy would be their lives! Sinners would be converted, sin and scandal would be less frequent, our churches would be thronged, virtue and piety would bloom, as in the primitive ages in the Church of God, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus would be consoled. May Jesus animate all His children with this holy spirit.

Section III.

Three sins against the love of Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice. First sin— Wilful neglect of Mass on Sundays and holidays.

Having explained, though imperfectly indeed, what the mass is, and how to hear mass devoutly, the reader will more clearly understand the grievousness of the sin of those who insult Jesus in the sacrifice of His love. We speak not here of heretics or unbelievers. They have not the faith of Christ. Let us

pray that God's light may shine upon their souls and give them faith. But we speak of the cold, bad, ungrateful Catholics. The mass is Jesus adoring, thanking, loving, and supplicating the Eternal Father for men. Is it possible that men could forget or neglect Jesus? Yes, so it is. The Church was obliged to command her children, under pain of mortal sin, to assist at the divine mysteries at least on Sundays and holidays! Some must do through fear what they ought to do through love. To hear mass devoutly on Sundays and holidays only, is indeed a very small token of our love for Jesus. Still we know there are some—thank God they are not numerous—some cold, bad Catholics, who neglect the duty of hearing mass on the Lord's day. Oh, ungrateful beings! you thereby offend God mortally; you insult Jesus, instead of loving Him; and this in the greatest manifestation of His love for you—the adorable sacrifice of the mass. This mortal sin which you commit by neglecting, through your own fault, to assist at mass on Sundays and holidays, deserves eternal damnation. If you went before God with that sin alone on your souls, His divine justice would condemn you to the everlasting

torments of the damned in hell. Ungrateful Christians! ask pardon of Jesus for the past; He will forgive you; and resolve in the depth of your souls never for the future to insult Jesus by neglecting to hear mass on the Lord's day.

Second sin.—To be late for mass on Sundays and holidays.

It is not enough to go to the chapel. We are bound to be in time. We are bound under pain of mortal sin to be present at least at the Credo. When we call to mind that Sunday is the Lord's day, that it belongs to God in a special manner, that the Divine Goodness has given us all that day to cease from and forget toil, to rest our fatigued limbs and wearied bodies, that thus our souls may be free to think of God, to meditate on His divine perfection, to enter into ourselves, to set our accounts in order, to turn our minds from earth to heaven, and to secure for ourselves everlasting bliss beyond the grave, oh, what a blessing must we not acknowledge the Lord's day to be! Sunday is a day of peace and joy to the soul; a day of prayer and worship; but the great worship of Sunday is the holy

sacrifice of the mass, in which all join the priest, and the infinite Victim of redemption is offered for all, and in the name of all, to the Eternal Father, for the four great ends of sacrifice. This is the great work and duty of Sunday. Thank God, this is known, for long before the holy sacrifice begins our chapels are crowded by devout worshippers who recite the holy Rosary, the sweet canticle of praise to Jesus and Mary, as a meet preparation for the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God upon the altar, which is the centre of all love and devotion. But the few bad, careless Christians too late for mass! They disedify, disturb, and distract the congregation at their silent prayers; they insult Jesus; they sully their souls with the foul stain of mortal sin; the very day the infinite mercy of God gave them to save their souls they turn to their own perdition. May heaven give us all the grace never to offend our blessed Lord by being late for mass through our own fault, on the Sabbath day, or on a holiday of obligation.

Third sin— Wilful irreverence and distraction at the Holy Sacrifice.

The good thief on the Cross obtained pardon and immediate entry into paradise, because he asked mercy of Jesus dying: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (*Luke* xxiii. 42). Mary Magdalen clung to the Cross, and clasped it to her breast, absorbed in the one thought of Jesus bleeding and dying. Such are the holy thoughts that ought to occupy our attention during mass. But how different the conduct of some cold, faithless Catholics! Unworthy Christians! who come to the holy mysteries decked out in the sinful finery of a luxurious age; whose whole aim and intention appear to be to attract the sinful eye; whose occupation consists in looking round the church, remarking their neighbors' dress, or the fashions of the day. Whilst their lips stir in thoughtless prayer, their hearts are far away from God. Calvary, the altar, Jesus dying, finds no room in their worldly minds. If they are "accursed who do the work of God negli-

gently," doubtless God's signal malediction will fall upon those who sin and attract to sin, in the sight of the angels, under the shadow of the altar. The reader will excuse a long passage very much to the point from St. Leonard of Port Maurice: "Will you ever again dare to hear mass sitting, whispering, looking idly about you, nay, sometimes even sleeping; contenting yourself with reciting thoughtlessly a few vocal prayers, heedless of the tremendous duty? O stupid world, that does not estimate mysteries so sublime! How is it possible that any one can remain in the presence of the altar with a distracted mind and dissipated heart, at a moment when the angels hover there trembling and astonished, absorbed in contemplating the effects of such a stupendous work?" How few there are who have not reason to accuse themselves, more or less, of this third sin against the love of Jesus in the holy sacrifice? How few have always assisted with that profound recollection and attention which the divine mysteries demand! Let us ask pardon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the past, and resolve for the future never to wound this all-loving Heart by any sort of irreverence in the house of God.

Section IV.

Daily Mass.

To hear mass on Sundays and holidays only, when we are obliged under pain of mortal sin, speaks but little for our love for Jesus. Daily mass shows the piety and devotion of the fervent Catholic. In Catholic countries, every church, whether in city, village, or country, has its daily mass—nay, many, several masses, and the attendance is a sure test of the piety of the people. Where fervour and piety reign, the churches are crowded, the altars surrounded by pious worshippers. Where the faith has grown cold, few surround the altar of God. Thanks to heaven, in faithful Ireland we have the happiness of having daily mass offered up, not only in our great cities, but even in our small towns and villages. The numbers that daily assist round the altar prove the living faith and fervent piety of the children of St. Patrick. For the glory of God, and the consolation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, may the number increase tenfold. What greater blessing could the goodness of God bestow upon us here below, than to be allowed to join the angels in adoring round

the altar; to see with the eyes of faith the heavens opening and the Lamb of God descending; to take part—and the faithful do take part—with God's minister in offering daily to the Almighty the infinite Victim of Redemption for ourselves, for the whole world, for the living and the dead? St. Nilus, disciple of St. John Chrysostom, relates (*in Epist. ad Anast.*) that when the holy doctor was celebrating mass, he himself beheld legions upon legions of angels, clothed in white robes, in profound meditation round the altar. Who would not love to join in their sweet song of praise to their and our Divine Lord? St. Chrysostom himself says (*Lib.* iii. *de Sacerd.*): "Where the king is, there also is the court; the angels are present at the sacrifice of the mass, and encompass the altar in honour of Him who is offered upon it;" and adds: "When you are before the altar, you ought no longer think you are among men. Do you not perceive that there are troops of angels and archangels that stand by you, and that tremble with respect before the Sovereign Master of heaven and earth?" St. Gregory also says (*De Dial., lib.* iv.): "When the priest is celebrating mass the skies and heavens

open, and multitudinous legions of angels come down from heaven to assist at the divine sacrifice." St. John (*Apoc.* xxi. 23) tells us that "the new Jerusalem hath no need of the sun or moon to shine on it; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." Daily in our chapels we have this same Lamb, who is the glory, the light, the lamp of paradise; and still some will not come to daily mass! Our Blessed Lord tells us in the gospel His longing wish to celebrate the first mass with His disciples: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you" (*Luke* xxii. 15). Have we the same ardent wish to hear His holy mass? Do we make it our delight to hear as many masses as we can, and never to omit an opportunity of hearing one more? The repetition, so far from fatiguing, ought but increase our thirst for the "courts of the Lord." There was but one sacrifice offered on Mount Calvary, and to the end of the world the heart of every fervent Christian will long to have been present, and with Mary to stand by the Cross of Jesus and sympathise with his sufferings. In like manner, were the holy sacrifice of the mass offered but once a year in one

place, would we not all desire to journey to that holy spot, to pour forth our hearts before our Blessed Lord? But the love of Jesus has shortened the road, and has brought salvation to our very doors. We have but a few minutes' walk to the church, and there all, the poor as well as the rich, the young as well as the old, can enjoy this treasure of heaven: there they possess Calvary and the altar, Jesus and redemption. A great saint has said: "Were it possible to have no Calvary, one mass would suffice to redeem the entire world!" And still everybody does not come to daily mass: all hearts are not on fire with the love of Jesus in the holy sacrifice.

The saints of God cannot find words strong enough to exhort the faithful to hear mass every day, and thereby to bring down the blessing of God upon themselves and their family. During mass, they tell us, is the time to ask mercy for the past and perseverance for the future. "Assuredly," says St. Jerome, "the Lord grants all the favours for which we petition Him in the mass, provided they be suitable to us." St. Gregory says (*Book of Dialog.*): "It is most indubitably certain that whosoever hears mass shall be preserved

from many and many a danger, both foreseen and unforeseen." To secure the protection of heaven, what a strong motive to hear mass every morning! St. Ambrose says: "If you are unwell, Jesus is your physician; if you be in a burning fever, He is the fountain of water; if you are loaded with iniquities, He is righteousness; if you want help, He is strength; if you want food, He is meat; if you be in darkness, He is light; if you be in danger of death, He is life; if you desire heaven, He is the way that leads to it."

Were all Christians persuaded of the value of the infinite treasure contained in the holy sacrifice of the mass, our churches would be crowded every morning; but it is sad to witness the number who neglect to hear daily mass, when they could do so without the least inconvenience. They loiter in the streets, or spend the precious time in sloth and indolence. But some will say: "We have not time." You have not time! Can you not spare one half-hour out of the twenty-four? How much precious time do you spend every day in idle, useless conversation? Will you give the whole day to your bodies, that shall one day rot, and can you not spare one half-hour for

your souls, that will never die? It is not time, but a good will that is wanting to you. Remember that God has given time and life for one end only—to serve Him here, and possess Him hereafter in glory. The half-hour you spend at daily mass you will not regret at the hour of your death and at the day of judgment. To balance the mis-spent time, you will then count up as precious moments all the masses you had heard during your life.

We are speaking of a happy death—the end for which God created us, as well as the end of life. We find in the *Hidden Treasure* (p. 32) this striking passage, attributed to Saint Augustine: "Whoever hears mass devoutly shall be preserved from a sudden death, which is the most awful weapon with which divine justice punishes the sinner. Lo!" says the saint, "here is the wonderful preservative against a sudden death: hear mass every day, but hear it with all possible devotion."

Daily mass, then, preserves us from a sudden, unprovided death. The devil cannot, during the day, surprise him who in the morning heard "the Word was made Flesh." Every motive then, of charity towards ourselves, as well as gratitude to God, induces us

to hear mass every morning. "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is." The more we love God, the more we shall feel ourselves drawn to God's altar. Every soul that God sanctifies, He inspires with this ardent love and desire for the holy sacrifice of mass. The greatest delight of such souls is to hear, not only daily mass, but as many masses as they can. They never omit an opportunity of hearing one mass more. May heaven inspire us all with this holy love and desire of mass.

When you hear, then, the bell announcing the morning sacrifice, think you hear an angel's voice, the call of God inviting you to join in the most holy function that can be performed, either on earth below or heaven above. Shut not your ears, nor harden your hearts to God's sweet voice. Proceed to the church with recollection, devotion, nay, spiritual joy. With the eyes of faith, see the choirs of angels and archangels singing hymns round the Lamb. Wish and pray for Mary's heart to join them, and with eyes fixed on the altar, and with the holy thoughts of Jesus bleeding, dying, and redeeming the world, join the priest in the holy sacrifice, "which honours God, rejoices the angels, edifies the Church, helps the liv-

ing, obtains rest for the dead, and make yourself a partaker in all things that are good." (*Imitation.*)

Section V.

Union with the perpetual Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides hearing daily mass, there is another devotion much loved and practised by pious souls—to join in the perpetual Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, at every moment of the day and of the night, is being offered up in some part or other of the world. This devotion is called "Union with the perpetual Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ." Not an hour or moment of the day or night but masses are being celebrated in some part of the world; for according as the sun, in his daily course, rises at different hours over various countries, he finds in each, priests offering the Holy Mass; so that the Sacrifice of our Divine Lord is uninterrupted. Jesus the Divine Victim, is unceasingly immolated on our altars.

Subjoined is a table called the "Eucharistic clock."

Hours of the day in Ireland corresponding to six o'clock in the morning when mass is celebrated in the following countries:

Morn.	
6	Europe: Spain, Portugal, Ireland.
7	Africa: Senegambia, St. Louis, The Canaries, Coral Isles.
8	South America: Pernambuco, Olindo, San Salvador.
9	South America: Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay. North America: Newfoundland.
10	South America: Bolivia, Chili, The Antilles, Martinique. North America: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick.
11	South America: New Grenada, Peru, Cuba, Jamaica. North America: Canada, United States.
12	North America: Missouri, Guatimala, East Mexico, New Brittany.
1	North America: Mexico, Rocky Mountains.
2	North America: California, Oregon.
3	North America: California, New Hanover, Oceanica, Mangareva.
4	Oceanica: Isles of Pomoton, Tahiti, Sandwich, Cook's Island.
5	Oceanica: Tonga Isles, Wallis, Fortuna.

Hours of the night in Ireland corresponding to six o'clock in the morning in the following countries.

Even.	
6	Oceanica: The Islands Kermandee, New Zealand, Auckland.
7	Oceanica: New Caledonia, The Hebrides, Caroline Isles.
8	Oceanica: Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Van Dieman's Land.

9	Oceanica: Mid. Australia, Moluccas, Celebes. Asia: Japan, Corea.
10	Oceanica: Western Australia, Malasia. Asia: China, Pekin, Tongking.
11	Asia: Siam, Malacca, Thibet.
12	Asia: Bengal, Patna, Madras, Madura, Pondicherry, Ceylon.
1	Asia: Malabar, Goa, Bombay, Agra, Lahore.
2	Indian Ocean: Seychelles Isles, Reunion, Madagascar.
3	Asia: Bagdad, Jerusalem, Syria. Africa: Zanzebar, Abyssinia. Europe: Central Russia.
4	Asia Minor: Smyrna. Europe: Poland, Russia, Turkey. Africa: Egypt, Cape Natal.
5	Europe: Italy, France, Switzerland, Belgium, England. Africa: Tunis, Algiers, Gabon.

From this table we see that the Divine Victim is unceasingly immolated; the perpetual Sacrifice is offered up at every hour and every moment in some part of the world; and thus are verified the words of the prophet Malachi: "From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is offered to my name a clean oblation" (i. 11).

What a holy practice, then, frequently during the day, and even when we awake from sleep at night, to offer ourselves to God in union with the masses then being celebrated,

thus presenting ourselves to the Eternal Father in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

It is recorded in the life of the great Alfonso Albuquerque, conqueror of the East Indies, that seeing himself and his fleet in imminent danger of shipwreck because of a violent tempest, he took in his arms a tender child, and holding him aloft between himself and heaven, exclaimed: "O Lord! for the sake of this sinless child, save us sinners from death." God was appeased at the sight of the pure infant; the storm was stilled; all were saved. So when the priest elevates the sacred host, let us oppose this spotless Lamb to the thunders of divine vengeance about to fall on us for our sins; the innocent Jesus will calm the tempest of God's anger.

Let us conclude this chapter with a passage from Saint Leonard: "Would that I could ascend to the summit of the loftiest mountain, and cry aloud, so that the whole world might hear me exclaiming: Foolish, foolish people! what are ye doing? Why will you not hasten to the churches to assist at every mass celebrated therein? . . . Let me on bended knees, and with hands uplifted, implore all to make

a firm resolution of henceforth employing all possible diligence in assisting at mass" (*Hidden Treasure*).

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! an angel's tongue could not sufficiently express the hidden treasure thou dost possess in the holy mass. Mass is heaven on earth—God Himself. What wilt thou return to the Lord for all He has done for thee? Make the following resolutions:

RESOLUTION.

For thy greater glory, O Sacred Heart of Jesus! I resolve: first, never to neglect Mass of obligation on Sundays and holidays; secondly, to hear Mass with the greatest piety, devotion, and reverence; thirdly, to assist at daily Mass when possible, never to omit an opportunity of hearing one Mass more; and lastly, often to offer myself to the Almighty, in union with the perpetual sacrifice of the Divine Lamb, immolated every moment of the day and night in some part of the world. Divine Victim of the altar, Jesus my Saviour, grant me grace to keep these holy resolutions.

CHAPTER IX.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Section I.

The love of Jesus in instituting the Blessed Sacrament.

Jesus is all love. "Jesus," says St. Bernard, "is honey in my mouth, music in my ear, jubilation in my heart. Jesus fills the soul with sweetness and spiritual joy" (Serm. xv). Jesus is our consolation in sorrow. He sweetens the bitterness of life. Jesus is everything to us—our strength in life, our hope in death, our possession in heaven. When in sorrow or pain, Jesus is our balm; when in sin, He lifts us up; when in despair, He gently breathes hope; when in joy, it is Jesus that gladdens the heart; when dying, we hope "to fall asleep in the Lord." We have presumed to speak—but how imperfectly!—of the love of Jesus in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We now attempt to treat of a subject not less holy,—the love of Jesus in the holy sacrament of the altar.

How express the love of Jesus in the holy communion? To redeem man by shedding

His precious blood, even to the last drop, did not satisfy the love of Jesus. To be a perpetual sacrifice daily on a thousand and more altars was not enough for the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. No; the souls of men are so dear to Him that He feeds and nourishes them with nothing less than His own precious body and blood! "Take ye and eat," says the Redeemer; "this is my body." "Drink ye all of this; this is my blood." O infinite, incomprehensible love of Jesus for man! Let us meditate and think over and over again on this article of our holy faith: "That in the Blessed Eucharist are contained, really, truly, and substantially, the body and the blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Trent, Sess. xiii. 1, 2). In the holy communion we receive into our poor breasts the God that created us, the God that redeemed us, the God that will judge us; the very flesh that was born of Mary, that was nailed to the cross, and that is now glorified in heaven. O thanks to heaven for being a child of the one only true Church of Jesus Christ. With good reason did the holy Council of Trent add (Sess. xiii. c. 2): "That in the holy communion Christ poured forth all the

treasures of His love towards men." And well might St. Augustine say, that "Jesus Christ, though an omnipotent God, has nothing more to give us." What more could He give us than Himself! If we all reflect on this, how ardently should we not love our blessed Lord!

Institution.

Every circumstance connected with the institution of the holy communion shows a special mark of the tender love of Jesus for man. First, it was on the eve of His Passion. "Jesus," says St. John (ch. xiii. 1), "knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to His Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

When about to bid an everlasting adieu to those we love, our hearts melt to tenderness, and we bestow our best gifts as proofs of our affection. So it was with Jesus. The next day He was to die—to bid farewell to those He loved—His holy mother and dear disciples, His tender heart was touched; sorrow and love filled His soul. He allowed "the beloved" and virgin disciple, St. John, to recline his head on His divine bosom. At this solemn

moment Jesus said: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer" (*Luke*, xxii. 15). At this supreme moment the Redeemer raised his eyes to heaven, "took the bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat. This is my body. And taking the chalice, Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the testament, which shall be shed for many to the remission of sins" (*Matt.*, xxvi. 26); thus bequeathing to His friends a lasting legacy, which divine love alone could think of and bestow. St. Francis of Sales concludes, "that in no other action can the Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in the institution of the Holy Eucharist; in which He, as it were, annihilates Himself, and becomes one of us, the bone of our bone, the flesh of our flesh." A God our food, a God our meat, a God our drink? With the prophet we may well exclaim: "Who ever heard of such a thing as this? Who ever saw anything like unto it?" "It is an admirable work" (*Isa.*, lxvi. 8).

Holy Communion under the appearance of bread.

The institution of holy communion under the appearance of bread is another proof of the tender love of Jesus for man. Had our Blessed Lord given Himself to us under the form of costly, rare food, the poor would be banished from the holy table; the poor could not receive the bread of angels. Now, the poor constitute the greater part of mankind redeemed by the blood of Jesus. The poor have been always the favorite children of the meek and humble Jesus. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* v. 3). "To preach the Gospel to the poor He hath sent me." The Redeemer practised what he taught. His holy mother was the humble maid of Israel; His reputed father, St. Joseph, an humble artisan. When born, He had not whereon to lay His head. His thirty-three years of life were spent in poverty, and in death His pillow was the hard tree of the cross. The life and death of Jesus furnish an example to help the poor to sanctify their poverty and sufferings. He

loved the poor, and hence He instituted the Blessed Eucharist under the form of bread, which is cheap and found in all countries, that the poor as well as the rich may partake of the table of the Lord. O tender mercy of Jesus, who thus enables the poor to feed on the bread of angels!

Section II.

The love of Jesus in the Holy Communion manifested by invitations, and promises, and threats.

Let us now hear our Lord's sweet invitation to His heavenly banquet. Long before the coming of Christ, the inspired writers saw in spirit the holy communion, and invited to the banquet, saying: "Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine I have mingled for you" (*Prov.* ix. 5). And again: "Eat, O my friends; and be inebriated, my dearly beloved" (*Cant.* v. 1). Holy communion is the "cellar of wine," which inebriates the soul, and dissolves her, so to speak, in the languishing love of the Canticles. Our blessed Redeemer renews these loving invitations: "Come to me," He says, "all ye that labor and are burthened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* xi. 28). Yes,

refresh you with meat and drink, my own body and blood. Jesus invites, nay, commands: "Take ye and eat: this is my body." We read in the Old Testament that King Assuerus, to manifest the riches and glory of his kingdom, made a great feast, which lasted a hundred and four score days, and invited the nobles of his realms to partake of it. In the banquet of holy communion, Jesus Christ, the King of kings, manifests, not His glory and majesty, but His mercy and love. He invites not only the nobles, but the poorest of His kingdom; and the feast lasts not only a hundred and four score days, but has lasted already near nineteen hundred years, and will last to the end of time. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt.* xxviii. 20).

Promises.

The fond mother woos the child of her heart not only by invitations of love, but by promises of reward. The love of the fondest mother for her child is nothing to the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for us His children. Hence He invites us to the holy table by promises of "reward exceeding great." He says:

"If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up on the last day. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (*John* vi. 52, etc.). The goodness of God, infinite though it be, could promise nothing greater than the possession of Himself for all eternity in paradise as the recompense of receiving worthily holy communion! Who will not love to approach frequently the table of the Lord? May we all one day enjoy the promised "good things of the Lord in the land of the living."

Threats.

As in the case of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, there are always found some cold, ungrateful Christians, who assist at Mass only when the threat of mortal sin speaks to their conscience, so it is also with Holy Communion. The love of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, the sweet invitations, the amazing promises, move them little; they will not approach the holy table of the Lord. These our Blessed Re-

deemer threatens to exclude for ever from the kingdom of heaven. "Except you eat the flesh of the son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (*Ibid.* 52). These threats, these promises, these sweet invitations, all proceed from the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to unite us to Himself in the Holy Sacrament.

Union with Jesus

"All perfection," says St. Liguori, "consists in union with God." Union with God means to have but one will with God, to will and to do what God wills, and nothing else. This union with His Heavenly Father our Blessed Lord practised and taught in life and death. "I descended from heaven not to do my own will, but to do the will of Him who sent me" (*John* vi. 38). When about to die, He prayed, "Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me. Yet, let not my will but thine be done" (*Matt.* xxvi.). And the prayer He taught us was, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Now the Holy Communion unites us to Jesus, to live in Him, and do His holy will. He says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood,

abideth in me, and I in him" (*John* vi. 57). St. Cyril of Alexandria says, "As two pieces of wax melted together become one, so we by the Holy Communion are similarly united with Jesus Christ" (*in Joan*, c. 13). As the branch of the vine draws its sap and its life and verdure from the trunk to which it is united, so the soul receives her life, her vigor, her health, her youth, and her beauty from union with Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion. In her intense love and desire to be united to her Divine Lord in the Holy Sacrament, blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque used to say, "I feel so great a desire to receive in the Holy Communion the heart of my God and the God of my heart, that to walk on burning coals, if it were necessary in order to communicate, would cost me less pain than the privation of this sacred food." May Heaven inspire our souls with this love and desire.

Section III.

The great effects of Holy Communion.

All the sacraments confer grace, but of all, Holy Communion is the most excellent. The other sacraments contain the gifts of God;

Holy Communion God Himself. The precious effects which the Blessed Sacrament produces in the souls of those who worthily receive it are manifold.

First Effect—Holy Communion sometimes remits even mortal sins.

For instance, if the communicant be unconsciously in mortal sin, and attrite only, that is having only attrition for his sin, Holy Communion infuses into the soul divine charity and restores the soul to the friendship of her God. St. Thomas, the great Doctor of the Church, says, "He who communicates, when infected with mortal sin without being aware of it, receives pardon; because if he had not been sufficiently contrite at the moment of absolution, by approaching the holy table with respect and devotion, he will receive in the Blessed Eucharist the grace of charity, which will perfect his contrition, and remit his mortal sin."

Second Effect—Holy Communion remits venial sins.

The Council of Trent says, "The Blessed Eucharist is the antidote that delivers us from venial faults" (Sess. xiii. 2). The Catechism

of the same Council adds, "It is beyond all doubt, that the Eucharist remits and entirely effaces the trifling faults called venial. And it restores to the soul, by effacing them, all that she had lost by the heat of concupiscence in committing them." The very best amongst us sin very often. "The just man falls seven times," says the Sacred Scripture. And again, "In many things we all offend" (*James* iii. 2). "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 *John* i. 6). Holy Communion is the sovereign remedy against all, it blots out and effaces those daily faults, and preserves the soul in youth and beauty. "This," says St. Ambrose, "is the daily bread which is eaten for the curing of our daily infirmities." "Each time," adds the Saint, "that the Blood of Jesus Christ is spilled, it flows for the remission of sins; and since I am incessantly sinning, I ought incessantly have recourse to this remedy." Venial sins cool the fervor of charity, Holy Communion warms and increases divine charity in the soul. As corporal food restores to the body what it loses by natural heat and the exhaustion of the day, so the bread of angels gives back to the soul what it loses by daily faults

and the heat of concupiscence. May we be worthy to receive daily this living and life-preserving Food.

Third Effect—Holy Communion remits the temporal punishment due to sin.

The water of baptism sends the soul straight to heaven—remits all the temporal as well as the eternal punishment due to sin. Baptism of blood or martyrdom united with charity entitles the soul to the immediate possession of paradise.* Perfect contrition and perfect charity remit sometimes a part, sometimes the whole, of the temporal punishment due to sin. Now, Holy Communion—fervent Communion—infuses into the soul perfect contrition and charity, which cancel temporal punishment, and hence free the soul, partly or altogether, from the pains of purgatory. We know not the amount of punishment in the other life our sins deserve. Our sins! so many and so manifold, sins in the very twilight of reason, sins in youth, sins in manhood, sins in old age, sins in thought, sins against our neighbor, sins against ourselves. How many sins every day,

* "Injuriam facit martyri qui orat pro martyre." "He does an injury to a martyr who prays for a martyr."—*Innocent the Third.*

every month, every year? How many in the course of our whole lives? Count them we cannot. Do not our iniquities surpass in number the very hairs of our heads? And still, though they be pardoned by the mercy of God, the punishment due to them must be expiated either in this life or in the next. Nothing defiled can ever enter the kingdom of heaven, the last farthing must be paid, the last stain of sin must be washed out; when the soul is a thousand times whiter and purer than the very rays of the sun, then and then only is she fit to behold the infinite glory of the eternal Son of God! O God of infinite sanctity, how can we poor sinners presume to be worthy to see Thee? Fervent frequent Communion will purify our souls, pay the debt due of our sins, and fit us to see and enjoy God soon after death. May Jesus grant it.

Fourth Effect—Holy Communion preserves the soul from mortal sin.

"The Blessed Eucharist," says the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv. c. 2), "is an antidote by which we are preserved from mortal sin." As material food preserves the body from death, so holy Communion is the life of the soul.

"Your fathers," says our blessed Redeemer, "did eat manna and are dead, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." "The bread that I will give you is my flesh for the life of the world." As the pure fountain refreshes the body by quenching the burning of thirst, so holy Communion, the fountain of living waters, cools and extinguishes the ardor of our passions. "If any of you," says St. Bernard, "does not experience such frequent or such violent motions of anger, of envy, or of lust, let him give thanks to the body of the Lord, which produces life in his soul" (*Serm. in Cœna*). "There is no means," adds St. Gregory the Great, "more certain or more prompt to restrain the passions, to root out bad habits, to inflame us with the love of God, than frequent Communion." "He who has a wound," remarks St. Ambrose, "seeks a remedy; our wound is sin, our remedy the heavenly and adorable Eucharist." Holy Communion is that life-preserving tree planted in the garden of Paradise; holy Communion is the fountain of living waters flowing in the same lovely garden; they who eat of the fruit of that tree (the body of the Lord), and who drink of the waters of that fountain (the blood

of the Lord), will be preserved from the death of the soul—mortal sin. May the body and blood of Jesus preserve our souls to life everlasting.

Fifth Effect—Holy Communion produces an increase of sanctifying grace, insures heaven to us, and inspires courage and strength to fulfil all duties.

Holy Communion as a sacrament, by virtue inherent in it, containing God Himself, infuses into the soul an increase of sanctifying grace, of divine charity, of the love of God. This is, in a word, the great and principal effect of this holy sacrament. Holy Communion insures heaven to us, it gives us a right and pledge to the enjoyment of paradise. We have for this no less an authority than our blessed Redeemer Himself, who says, "If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." And again, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Writing on this subject St. Bernard exclaims, "Rejoice, ye spouses, be in transports of joy. . . . You possess the pledge, you hold the earnest of the spouse to whom you will be happily

united in the celestial country." Ours then is heaven with all its glory, paradise with all its joy, God Himself with all His beauty, if we but make worthy Communions. May heaven grant it.

Holy Communion inspires courage and strength for all sacrifices, courage to suffer, nay, to die for Christ. The Bread of Life gives strength to bear with patience, and even with joy, poverty, sufferings, humiliations, the most painful trials, the most cruel torments, and even martyrdom itself, for the love of God. "Nothing," says St. Jerome, "strengthens the soul so much as this bread of life;" and St. Chrysostom says, "Let us retire from this sacred table like lions, full of ardor and terrible to the devils."

What gives strength to the poor of Christ in their poverty, trials, and privations of all kinds? Ask them, and they will tell you it is the table of the Lord. What gives strength to the tender maiden in the cloister to break the strongest ties that bind the human heart to this world, strength to lead in human flesh an angel's life, courage, whether on the battle field or in the fever hospital, to live and die for the suffering members of her Spouse?

Ask her: she replies, "The bread of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins." What gives courage to the missioner to bid adieu for ever to home and country to win souls to Jesus? What fills his soul with joy in the burning sands of Africa, or the wild wastes of Siberia? Ask him: he replies, "The body and blood of Jesus in the holy sacrifice of the Mass." "Even if I walk in the shadows of death, I shall fear not, because thou art with me." What gives power to the priest of Jesus Christ to preserve himself unsullied amid the sins and abominations of a wicked world? The body and blood of Jesus Christ. What gave courage to the confessor to rejoice in his chains, and to the martyr to meet death in its fiercest shapes with serene intrepidity? The bread of angels. Fortified, nourished, animated by the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Communion, the dark dungeon, the rack, the gibbet, the amphitheatre, the red-hot gridiron, the blazing pile, for them had no terror. This heavenly manna took from the tiger his fierceness, cooled the heat of the furnace, blunted the edge of the sword. *O unspeakable effects of holy Communion!*

Besides these general effects, how many

others known only to the devout communicant? how many to God alone? "Give me a lover," says St. Augustine, "and he will understand what I mean." In communing with her Lord, with Jesus in her heart, the holy soul finds tears of sorrow for past sins, confidence for the future, burning love for God, courage to bear up with trials and adversities, fortitude to live, yea, and if necessary, to die for Christ, and the peace and joy of a good conscience, which is a "perpetual feast"—a paradise on earth. O the sweet, inexpressible effects of Holy Communion! May we all experience them in our souls.

Will not these holy effects induce us to frequent Communion, namely—1, remission of mortal sin; 2, remission of venial sins; 3, remission of the temporal punishment due to sin; 4, preservation from mortal sin; 5, increase of sanctifying grace; 6, a pledge, a right to heaven; 7, courage to make any sacrifice for Christ; 8, countless secret effects known only to the pious communicant and to God—will not all these induce us to frequent fervent Communion? This leads us to our next chapter—Frequent Communion.

We shall conclude this chapter by a passage

from a letter of St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, to Pope Cornelius, both of the third century, to show that in the early ages the Christians prepared for martyrdom by receiving holy Communion. "Let those communicate," says St. Cyprian to the Pope, "who are in the state of grace, so that those whom we invite and exhort to martyrdom may not be naked and without weapons in the combat, but armed against the assault by the body and blood of Jesus Christ; and since the Eucharist is the shield of those who partake of it, let us provide with the succor of this celestial food those whom we wish to defend against the attacks of the devil."

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! what infinite love of Jesus in the holy Communion, love manifested by its institution, by sweet invitations, by extraordinary promises and effects! Holy Communion is thine, the body and blood of Jesus are thine, God and heaven are thine. Express thy gratitude in the following resolution:

RESOLUTION.

My loving Jesus in the holy Communion! I resolve all the days of my life to appreciate and esteem, as the greatest gift of Heaven, Thy body and blood, and daily to thank Thee for this bread of angels. Dearest Lord, keep for me by Thy grace this my resolution.

CHAPTER X.

FREQUENT COMMUNION.

SECTION I.

The practice of the primitive Christians. What is and what is not frequent Communion.

ON the subject of frequent Communion much confusion prevails even among pious souls, arising from not clearly understanding what is, and what is not, frequent Communion. They often confound the dispositions required for what is not frequent Communion with those required for frequent Communion; as also the dispositions of precept with those of counsel only. Thus many, from this cause,

are kept away from the holy table. Hence a clear exposition of the teaching of the Church on these points will benefit the devout reader.

The practice of the primitive Christians.

The Apostles, educated in the school of Jesus Christ Himself, taught the first Christians to communicate every day. This we learn from the Acts of the Apostles (ii. 46), "Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart." The best interpreters understand this of holy Communion. St. Jerome and the earliest writers attest this fact, and hence St. Thomas concludes, "It is certain that in the early ages, all who assisted at mass received holy Communion."

The Congregation of the Council of Trent says, "Formerly all who assisted at the holy sacrifice participated in the holy mysteries; it is then permitted to communicate every day, because, as the faithful sin every day, they must be exhorted to have recourse every day to this remedy."

"It is certain," says St. Francis of Sales, "that in the primitive Church the Christians

communicated every day, even those engaged in the married state." By this habit of daily communion the Christians were animated with courage to meet death, at all times and in its fiercest forms, for the faith.

This holy custom of daily communion prevailed for several centuries in the Church. Afterwards, when with increasing number the fervor of Christians began to wax cold, all were commanded to communicate every Sunday (Benedict XIV., *de Syn.*, lib. 5, c. i.).

This law of weekly communion existed up to the eighth or ninth century. The faithful began to grow more tepid, and neglected weekly communion, then the Church made a new law, obliging all to communicate at least three times a year—at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost (Benedict XIV., *Syn.*, lib. 5, c. i.).

In after ages the tepidity of the Christian became so great, that Innocent the Third, in the Council of Lateran, in the year 1215, obliged all, under the most severe penalties, to communicate at least at Easter. The spirit of the Church is ever the same, but fervor and piety had grown cold, and so the discipline of the Church had to be relaxed.

The spirit of the Church.

The Church has at all times encouraged and exhorted her children to frequent Communion. We have seen that the Apostles, educated in the school of the Redeemer, taught the primitive Christians to communicate daily. The Council of Trent, assisted by the Holy Ghost, about 1500 years after the Apostles, taught the same doctrine to her children in the words following: "The sacred and holy Synod" (Sess. xxii., c. vi.) "would fain indeed, that at each Mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only by spiritual desire, but also by the sacramental participation of the Eucharist." And (in Sess. xiii., chap. viii.) the holy Council, in the most touching appeal, exhorts the faithful to frequent Communion: "The holy synod, with true fatherly affection, admonishes, exhorts, begs, and beseeches, through the bowels of the mercy of our God, that all mindful of the exceeding love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His own soul as the price of our salvation, and gave us His own flesh to eat, would believe and venerate those sacred mysteries of His body and blood with such constancy

and firmness of faith, with such devotion of soul, with such piety and worship, as to be able frequently to receive that superstantial bread, that it may be to them truly the life of the soul and the perpetual health of their mind, and that, being invigorated by the strength thereof, they may, after the journeying of this miserable pilgrimage, be able to arrive at their heavenly country, there to eat, without the veil, that same bread of angels which they now eat under the sacred veils."

Let us add a few of the testimonies of the teachers of the Church and Fathers. Pope Innocent, in the year 1679 (decretum 12), in a decree to all Christendom, praises and approves of daily communion for persons in every state of life, provided they bring with them the proper dispositions. Pope Benedict XIV. (Bullarium, tom. i. page 440), expresses the ardent desire of seeing renewed in the Church the fervor and daily communion of the first centuries. St. Ambrose says (liber 5, de Sacr. c. 4), "Receive the Eucharist every day if permitted, so that each day it may become useful to you." St. Basil says (Epist. ad Caesari), "It is useful to communicate every day, to participate of the body and

blood of Jesus Christ." St. Jerome remarks (Com. in Ezechiel, c. 18), "In the Lord's Prayer we ask for the living bread descended from heaven, in order that we may merit to receive every day in this life that supersubstantial food, which we shall receive for ever in the next." St. Bernard teaches the same doctrine: he says, "We have within us an inveterate ulcer, as long as we are under the yoke of sin; communion is the sovereign remedy for curing it; receive it then every day, if you are deemed worthy by your confessor" (Sermo in Coena). "Eucharist" adds St. Augustine, "is your daily bread, necessary for this life" (Homilia, 43, in Quinqua). "In fine," concludes the Catechism of the Council of Trent (pars 2, num. 63) "the words, 'thou sinnest daily: receive daily,' convey the sentiments not alone of St. Augustine, but of all the fathers who have written on the subject."

The reader will excuse a few citations from modern doctors of the Church and masters of spiritual life.

Of St. Liguori we may say, that by his theology and pious books he has revived in the Church the holy and primitive habit of

frequent communion. St. Thomas, the angel of the schools, says: "The virtue of the sacrament of the Eucharist is to give to man salvation; therefore it is useful that we should participate in it every day, so as to partake each day of its fruits" (pars iii. quest. 80, art, 81). St. Charles Borromeo says: "Let the pastors and preachers frequently exhort the faithful to the salutary practice of frequently receiving the Holy Eucharist, by the example and practice of the primitive Church, by the words and testimonies of the holy fathers, and in fine, by the sentiments of the Council of Trent, which wishes us to communicate each time that we assist at the holy sacrifice of the mass" (Council iii. p. 74). The pious and learned Fenelon says: "Partake of this nourishment as often as it can profit you; and should that be every day, partake of it every day. The primitive Christians communicated every day: these times are not less dangerous. Never was this daily remedy so much wanted. Communicate, then, as the apostles made the primitive Christians—that is, every day—if permitted, and if your confessor thinks it useful for the sanctification of your soul."

The saints practised what they preached,

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and hence we find that they received holy communion every day. Witness St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Catherine of Genoa, St. Teresa, and many other saints. Daily communion infused into their souls that angelic purity, that serene joy amidst the greatest trials and austere penances, that heroic sanctity, intimate union with God, and constant spirit of prayer, that made them the great saints they were.

Frequent communion, then, was taught by the apostles, educated by Jesus Christ Himself; taught by the fathers, brought up in the school of the apostles; taught and practised by the saints of God in every age. The Church may vary her laws and practices, but her doctrine is ever the same; her teaching, like God Himself, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

What is meant by frequent Communion?

By frequent communion the approved writers of the Church understand communion every day, several days in a week, or at least more than once a week. St. Alphonsus Liguori, whose writings have been approved by the Holy See, and who has been praised by

Leo XII. for recommending the frequent use of the sacraments, is sufficient authority on this important point. Now this learned saint repeats again and again that communion once a week is not frequent communion. Let one passage suffice. The saint says: "Monthly or weekly communion cannot be called frequent, on account of the great coldness of these miserable times; for, according to the ancient discipline of the Church, it should be called rare rather than frequent" (*Reply to Aristasio*). Hence, we can safely conclude, that holy communion daily, several times a week, or twice a week, is frequent communion; and that holy communion once a week is not frequent communion.

Section II.

The dispositions of precept and counsel for frequent communion and weekly communion.

In our preparation for holy communion, it is necessary to distinguish what is of precept from what is only of counsel, in order that we may not sin by abuse of holy things—irreverence towards the august sacrament; or lose

the life of our souls by keeping away from the holy table. A precept obliges under pain of sin; a counsel does not. By neglecting or violating a precept we offend God; by neglecting a counsel we do not offend God, but merit less grace. Now there are dispositions of precept and of counsel for frequent communion, and dispositions both of precept and counsel for weekly communion too. It will increase the devotion of the pious communicant clearly to understand them.

Dispositions of precept for frequent communion.

St. Augustine says (Serm. viii. de Verbo Dom.): "Receive daily, that it may be every day profitable to you, but live in such a manner that you may be worthy to receive every day." What are the dispositions required, or of precept, for frequent communion? In one word, they consist in this—the frequent communicant must be exempt not only from mortal sin, but from every affection for or attachment to deliberate venial sin. For this we have the highest authorities in the Church. The learned Pope Benedict XIV. (*De Syn.* lib. vii. cap. 12, n. 9) says: "Confessors should

not allow frequent communion to those who, avoiding mortal sin, yet retain an affection for venial faults, of which they do not wish to correct themselves." St. Liguori says (*Praxis*, clxix.): "It is an error to grant frequent communion, that is, several times in the week, to those who commit venial faults, for which they retain an affection, and of which they do not wish to correct themselves." "As for persons," continues the saint, "who habitually commit deliberate venial sins, and in whom no amendment, or even desire of amendment, is visible, it would be well not to permit them to communicate more than once a week." "Hence a person"—we use still the very words of the saint (*Spouse of Christ*, p. 635)—"who commits deliberate venial sins, by telling wilful lies, by vanity of dress, by feelings of dislike, by inordinate attachments, or is guilty of other similar faults, which he knows to be an obstacle to his advancement in perfection, and who does not endeavor to correct these defects, especially if these defects were against humility or obedience, that person cannot be permitted to communicate more than once a week." Therefore, it follows that the frequent communicant must be exempt

from every affection for or attachment to deliberate venial sins—he must try to avoid and correct any venial fault which he had been in the habit of committing.

It may be asked, does it then follow that the frequent communicant must avoid all venial sins? By no means. Exemption from venial sin, and exemption from an affection to venial sin, are two distinct and different things. The Council of Trent (sess. vi., cap. xxiii.) teaches, that it is impossible, without a special privilege of grace, to avoid all venial sin. That privilege belonged to the Immaculate Sinless mother of God alone. A holy soul may and will sometimes fall into venial faults, but she retains no affection for them as long as she hates and detests them, and endeavors to correct and avoid them for the time to come. On the other hand the soul has an affection for those venial faults which she continues to commit, into which she easily and frequently falls, without making any effort to avoid or correct them. St. Francis of Sales says, "We can never be perfectly exempt from venial sins, but we can very well avoid all affection to venial sin. Truly it is one thing to tell a lie once or twice, with full

deliberation, in a matter of little importance, and another thing to take pleasure in lying, and to be attached to that kind of sin." "Affection to venial sin," continues the same saint, "is contrary to devotion; it weakens the strength of the soul, prevents divine consolations, opens the door to temptations, and, if it does not kill the soul, it renders it extremely infirm, and it is in this that it differs from venial sins; these last happening to a soul, and not there continuing long, do not injure it much; but should the same venial sins remain in the soul, by the affection it feels for them, they cause it to lose the grace of devotion." Such are the suitable dispositions, the dispositions required by theologians for frequent holy communion.*

St. Liguori allows one exception to this general rule. He says (*Praxis*, num. 149), "It is sometimes good and desirable to allow frequent and daily communion to those who are in danger of falling into mortal sin, that they may receive grace and strength to resist the temptations." And the saint relates, "That a certain nobleman was so habitually

* This is the sense in which I have called these dispositions "dispositions of precept."

addicted to a certain grievous and sensual sin, that he despaired of overcoming his bad habit. Having communicated every day for several weeks, according to the advice of his confessor, he was entirely delivered from the vice which had tyrannized over him so long, and never afterwards committed sin against the holy virtue of purity.

The dispositions of counsel for frequent Communion.

"Nothing," says St. Jerome, "ought to be more pure, more calm, more adorned than that soul which prepares within it a dwelling for the Lord." Jesus Christ is so holy that the dispositions to be desired are those which filled the soul of the Blessed Mother of God herself, when she knelt down at the holy table. The better dispositions we bring to the altar, the more graces shall we receive from our Blessed Lord. "Holy things for the holy," and how holy ought the communicant be whose soul is daily fed and nourished by the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The highest sanctity is not high enough for such a soul.

What are those dispositions? They are:

1. A sensitive, nervous fear of the smallest

venial sins, not because they deserve punishment, but because they offend so good a God. They who love God ardently endeavor to avoid by all means in their power the slightest venial offence.

2. Mental prayer or meditation according to the capacity and state of life of each person. The soul that loves God loves to commune with God in holy prayer. In prayer the soul finds light and fervor, and other graces which the Holy Ghost Himself breathes into the heart.

3. Purity of intention, that is, not only in the morning, but frequently during the day, to offer all our actions to the greater glory of God, to perform them solely to please Him, and during each action to keep alive in our souls a sense of the presence of God by short ejaculations and aspirations, which can be multiplied by thousands every day. Without fatiguing the mind, they keep the soul ever in the presence of God.

4. Every day to practise many little acts of humility, self-denial, and mortification of the senses; and moreover, to watch and obey the secret inspirations of God. These secret inspirations, these silent whispers from heaven to the fervent soul, are many every day.

5. The hearing of Mass, nay, of as many Masses as possible, every day, daily fervent visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and lastly, tender filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The following passages may appropriately conclude our remarks on the subject of frequent communion.

St. Francis of Sales says (*Introd. to Devout Life*), "When a soul has attained a considerable degree of perfection, when she spends several hours in the day in mental prayer, and has moreover conquered the greater part of her evil inclinations, she may be allowed to communion every day." And St. Thomas says, "If any one finds by experience that by daily Communion the fervor of his love is increased, and his reverence not diminished, such a person ought to communicate every day" (In 4 Sent. 2, Distin. 2, 9, 3, Art. 1).

The Disposition of precept for Weekly Communion.

We have shown that weekly communion is not frequent communion. What are the necessary dispositions, or dispositions of precept, for weekly communion? We reply, exemption from mortal sin. In other words, any

person free from mortal sin can communicate worthily once a week. Such is the teachings of the approved writers of the Church. Neither venial sins nor affection to venial sins prevent weekly communion. We have seen in the preceding section that Benedict XIV. (*Syn.* lib. 7, c. 12, n. 9), whilst he forbids frequent communion to those who retain an affection for venial sins, does not forbid weekly, which is not frequent communion. Saint Liguori repeats the same doctrine. "As for persons," he says (*Praxis.* n. 149), who habitually commit deliberate venial sins, and in whom no amendment, or even desire of amendment is visible, it would not be well to permit them to communicate more than once a week." Therefore the saint would permit holy Communion once a-week to such persons. Again, St. Liguori says (*Reply to Arist.*): "My monitor will say that even in the early ages of the Church, exemption from affection to venial sin was considered necessary for weekly communion. I say it was not; for communion was forbidden only to those who had an affection to mortal sin." Again, "It cannot be denied that the mere exemption from mortal sin is not a sufficient disposition for fre-

quent communion ; but it is sufficient for communion which is not frequent, or for weekly communion ; otherwise, persons who have an affection to venial sins should be forbidden to communicate even a few times in the year." And again he says, "It has always appeared to me suitable and right to advise seculars who avoid grievous faults, or who commit them but seldom, ... to communicate every week. In fact, it is proved by experience that those who communicate every week never or rarely commit mortal sins. Many persons who avoid mortal sin by communicating every week would not have strength to do so if they communicated but once a month" (*Reply to Arist.*). Father Scaramelli, whose work (*Directoire Ascètique*) is highly prized, says, "A confessor may and ought to grant weekly communion to souls whom he finds disposed for absolution ; such is the general sentiment of spiritual directors, and appears at present to be the practice of the Church." "Weekly Communion," says the learned Suarez, "ought not to be omitted because of venial sins, for it is one of the great fruits of the sacrament to preserve from falling into mortal sin." We shall give one pas-

sage from a living author, the learned and holy Mgr. De Sègur of Paris. He says, "I am spending my life in directing and hearing the confessions of children and young people. Whilst on the other hand, with this holy practice, it becomes easy for them to avoid evil. . . . . If you can, my dear little child, communicate every Sunday and feast-day." This pious prelate advises and recommends holy Communion once a week to children who have made their first communion.

Let us conclude in the words of the Council of Trent: "Those persons" (Sess. xiii. c. viii.), "communicate sacramentally and spiritually (that is with fruit), who so prove and dispose themselves as to approach the divine table with the wedding garment." "The wedding garment" is the state of grace, or exemption from mortal sin. It follows therefore, that neither venial sins or affection to venial sins are an impediment to weekly Communion. The only condition required is exemption from mortal sin, so that any soul, simply in the state of grace, can approach the holy table worthily and with fruit once a week.

Section III.

Preparation for Holy Communion.

Having shown from the best authorities the dispositions of precept for weekly communion, we add that the dispositions of counsel are the holiest the communicant can bring to the holy table; but all good dispositions whatsoever—whether for frequent, or weekly, or other communion, whether of precept or of counsel, all such good dispositions in the communicant are to be obtained from God by a fervent preparation, which will form the subject of the present section.

When we proved that for weekly communion exemption from mortal sin was sufficient, it was far from our desire that the communicant should rest content with that disposition. Our object was to promote the glory of God and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament by encouraging weekly communion, believing with St. Liguori that those who communicate weekly will never or rarely offend God by mortal sin—and also believing that, to those who approach the holy table even once a week, the Holy Ghost Himself will communicate

greater grace than mere freedom from mortal sin. A fervent preparation will not fail to obtain from God holy dispositions, proportioned to the fervor of the preparation; and hence we implore of our readers seriously to meditate on the few reflections contained in this section. Jesus Christ, in the Holy Eucharist, will confer His graces upon the soul in proportion to its fervor in preparing to receive Him. St. Bonaventure says, "I believe that a person receives more grace in one communion well made and with good preparation, than in many made without the same preparation."

Seed does not fructify save in a well prepared soil, nor does holy communion produce its fruits in the garden of the soul, except it be well prepared. The quantity of water we draw from a fountain is in proportion to the size and capacity of the vessel; now the Blessed Eucharist is an inexhaustible fountain of grace, and each communicant will drink in graces in proportion to the holy dispositions of the soul. Preparation then for holy communion is of the last importance. Preparation for holy communion is twofold—remote and immediate. A few observations on each will be acceptable to the pious reader.

Remote Preparation.

Remote preparation consists in innocence in life, which, if forfeited by the commission of mortal sin, must ordinarily be recovered by a good confession before approaching the table of the Lord. God demands of each one before holy communion to examine, to search into his soul, to see how he stands in the sight of heaven. "Let each one prove himself," says St. Paul, "and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this chalice" (1 *Cor.* xi. 28). Let each one prove himself, and if his conscience upbraids him with mortal sin, let him recover the friendship of God by a good confession! otherwise he incurs the terrible guilt of sacrilege. The enormity of the guilt of sacrilege must strike terror into the heart of any Christian believing in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The sacrilegious communicant receives the God of all sanctity into a soul impure, corrupt, defiled, filled with unclean spirits. The food of life becomes the poison of death, nay everlasting death. St. Paul says (1 *Cor.* xi. 29), "Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, eateth and drinketh

judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." No words could describe more forcibly the sin of sacrilege. Sacrilege hardens the heart, steels the conscience, darkens the mind, and brings despair and the wrath of God upon the soul. Let one example out of many suffice. When did the fell spirit of hell possess Judas to commit the greatest crime ever perpetrated? After receiving unworthily the body and blood of Jesus Christ. After making the first sacrilegious communion, he gave Jesus the traitor's kiss, sold his Divine Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver. What next? He hanged himself in despair, and went down straight into hell. Of this wretched man the Redeemer said: "It had been better for him had he never been born." O sin of sacrilege, may we hate and fear thee! St. Bonaventure says: "Unworthy communion subjects us to sin and temptation, disposes us to damnation, scandalizes our neighbor, darkens the spirit, calls down the wrath of God, abridges our temporal life, and deprives us of special graces." To the sacrilegious communicant the following awful threats of God's wrath are applied by the saints, "Pour forth thy indignation upon them, add iniquity upon

their iniquity, and let them not come unto Thy justice. Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and with the just let not their names be written" (*Ps.* lxviii. 25). Enough, no doubt, to inspire us all with holy fear of unworthy communion, and to make us beseech God to avert this damning sin from the children of His holy Church. A serious remote preparation, including a good confession, will secure the soul against the dreadful evil of an unworthy communion.

Immediate Preparation.

The remote preparation removes from the soul everything displeasing or offensive to God: the immediate preparation decorates the soul, so to speak, with the ornaments of grace meet to adorn it for the reception of the Lord of holiness, the Divine Guest. This immediate preparation consists in fervent acts of the soul, and ought to begin at least the evening before communion. The angelic St. Aloysius spent three days preparing for each communion, and thus by his fervor attained in a short time such eminent sanctity. It is not too much for us poor sinners to begin to prepare the evening before holy Communion. "It

is a great work," says the Royal Prophet, "since it is not to prepare an abode for man, but for God Himself" (*Para.*, xxix. 1). On the eve of holy communion the pious soul enters into herself, meditates on the infinite sanctity of Jesus Christ, and on her own poverty and unworthiness. Some such thought as this never leaves the mind: "To-morrow I am to receive into my poor soul the body and blood of Jesus Christ—sanctify itself. May Jesus Himself prepare me." God had promised a Redeemer, and during the long space of four thousand years the Virgin Mother was before the divine eye of the adorable Trinity, to fill to overflowing her pure soul with every grace and virtue that infinite power could bestow upon a creature. For what? that she may be worthy to bear in her womb the Son of God. To-morrow I am to receive into my soul the same Son of God, Jesus born of Mary; I so unworthy sinner that I am! O Jesus, prepare me. How beautiful are the words of the *Imitation of Christ* (b. iv. c. 1): "Behold Noah, a just man, labored a hundred years in building the ark; and how shall I be able in the space of one hour to prepare myself to receive with reverence the Maker of the world?"

"Moses, Thy servant and special friend, made an ark of incorruptible wood, which he also covered with pure gold, that he might deposit therein the tables of the law: and shall I, a rotten creature, presume so easily to receive Thee, the Maker of the law and the Giver of life? Solomon, the wisest of the kings of Israel, employed seven years in building a magnificent temple for the praise of thy name, and for eight days together celebrated the feast of the dedication thereof: he offered a thousand pacific victims. . . . And I, a wretch, the vilest of men, how shall I bring Thee into my house, who can spend scarcely one half hour devoutly?" With the same Solomon the pious communicant may say: "If the heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built" (II. *Para.*, vi. 18). Yes, if the heavens be not holy enough for God, if the angels and saints be not pure enough in His sight, how can I, a poor sinner, receive into my soul—my soul so unworthy—the same God of infinite purity and sanctity? These holy thoughts will inspire the pious soul to make, by the aid of God's grace, many fervent acts—acts of sincere sorrow for having offended so good a God,

acts of profound humility, acts of praise and thanksgiving, acts of love divine.

The devout communicant will do well to read some pious book, such as the lives of the saints, books treating of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the fourth book of the *Imitation of Christ*, which cannot be excelled; and whilst reading, will send up many fervent ejaculations to God to prepare the soul to receive worthily on the morrow the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The soul, absorbed in these holy thoughts, retires to rest; and we may say of her what the sacred Scriptures say of St. Stephen, the first martyr, she falls asleep in the Lord.

The morning of Holy Communion.

Before the morning's dawn the soul watches, and with the Royal Prophet cries out: "O God my God, to Thee do I watch at the break of day. For Thee my soul hath thirsted" (*Ps.* lxii. 2). As Jesus was the last thought at night, so He is the first thought in the morning. "To-day I am to receive into my soul the body and blood of Jesus Christ. May Jesus prepare me."

The pious communicant rises early in the

morning. No sloth, no negligence. Morning prayers are said with earnest fervor and piety. The exterior is in keeping with the interior. The dress neat, clean, but modest. On the way to the chapel, as the people yet call the church, if the distance be long, as often happens in the country, the time is turned to good account. No idle conversation—the conversation is with God. The soul is calm, recollected, nay, joyous, preparing for the banquet. Jesus is now more intensely in the heart and thoughts, the time approaches nearer, multiplied aspirations ascend to heaven, bespeaking grace for the nuptials with the Lamb.

The pious communicant arrives at the Church long before the time of Mass, desiring to be away from the noise of the world, from family, from business, and to have some time to be alone with God, in the peace and calm of His sanctuary. The perpetual lamp before the tabernacle speaks of the Real Presence. Jesus is on the altar; the soul feels the awe of His presence—"Reverence my sanctuary;" but hears the sweet voice of His love—"Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.*, xi. 28); and sweeter still, "Arise, make haste, my love, my

beautiful one, and come" (*Cant.*, ii. 10). The pious communicant replies, "Thy servant heareth, O Lord" (I. *Kings*). "My heart is ready;" and kneels down, adores God, and begins a more fervent preparation for holy Communion. The soul is now in the presence of the Lord, communing familiarly with him. Each look of love to the tabernacle is reflected back in a current of grace from the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the heart of the pious penitent. The mass begins, the adorable sacrifice is being offered up, the heavens open, Jesus again descends upon the altar, accompanied by His angels, and the communicant assists at the "tremendous mystery" with all possible attention and devotion.

Immediately before receiving, the pious soul elicits fervent acts of the different virtues. She elicits an act of firm faith in the real presence of the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, who created her, redeemed her, and on the last day will judge her, and whom she is now about to receive. If St. Elizabeth cried out, "Whence is this unto me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (*Luke* i. 43), the pious communicant can say, whence this fa-

vor to me, that my Lord Himself should not only visit me, but feed my soul with His own flesh and blood? "I believe, Lord: help thou my unbelief" (*Mark*, ix. 23).

This act of faith will inspire the soul to make acts of profound humility and contrition. Knowing the sanctity of God, and her own unworthiness, she cannot but exclaim with the centurion in the Gospel, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed" (*Matt.*, viii. 8). "If you had," says the *Imitation of Christ*, "the purity of an angel, and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, you would not be worthy to receive this holy Sacrament." The consciousness of her unworthiness, and the desire to purify herself more and more, will remind the soul to elicit acts of perfect contrition for her sins. She will say with the humble publican, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner" (*Luke* xviii. 13). "Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels" (*Ps.* li.). She also elicits acts of confidence and love. Jesus invites her. He knows her poverty. She cannot prepare

for Him a fit habitation. She begs of her Divine Lord to accept her poverty, and prepare for Himself His own abode. "Those who are well stand not in need of a physician, but only those that are sick" (*Matt.*, ix. 12). Her last acts are acts of divine love. She loves Jesus for His own sake, for His own infinite goodness. She gives Him herself without reserve. She desires to have, and offers Him, the love of the holiest souls on earth. She ascends in spirit to heaven, she invites all the blessed to join her, she offers to her Lord the love of all the saints and blessed spirits in heaven, the love of Mary beyond all created love; and thus with the love of earth and heaven centred in her soul, and her soul centred in her God, she receives the body and blood of Jesus Christ, her Divine Guest.

The *Imitation of Christ* puts into the mouth of the communicant these holy words: "O Lord, my God, my Creator, and my Redeemer, I desire to receive Thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honor, with such gratitude, worthiness, and love, with such faith, hope, and purity, as Thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, received Thee, when she most humbly and devoutly

answered the angel, who declared to her the mystery of the Incarnation: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word" (b. iv., c. xvii.).

The Redeemer Himself said to St. Matilda, "When you communicate, desire to have the greatest love which the saints have had for me, and in return for this I will accept your love in proportion to the fervour with which you wished for it."

Did every communicant prepare in this manner for the table of the Lord, our loving Saviour would not be offended by so many cold, careless, tepid, we will not say, sacrilegious communions; the Sacred Heart of Jesus would not be wounded by so many relapsing sinners—sinners who frequent the sacraments, but receive without much fruit, as they receive without due preparation the bread of angels. Sin and crime would cease; fervor and piety would reign; and the sanctity of the primitive Christians, who had but one heart and one soul, would again bloom in the Church of God. Sacred Heart of Jesus, for Thy greater glory, grant us all the grace to receive at all times worthily and with full fruit Thy sacred Body and Blood.

Section IV.

Thanksgiving after Holy Communion.

Gratitude is a noble sentiment of the human heart. Every one is pleased and touched by gratitude for favours received. Ingratitude pains, shocks us, and prevents future liberality. Our Blessed Lord Himself complains of the ungrateful. When He cured the ten lepers, only one returned to thank Him. The Redeemer said: "Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? Is there no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger?" (*Luke* xvii. 18). Again, our Lord complained to blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. "Behold," He said, "this Heart, which has loved men so much, that it has spared nothing, even to the exhausting and consuming itself, to testify its love; and yet in return I receive from the greater number but coldness, ingratitude," etc. As all good gifts proceed from God, we ought to thank Him for them; but how thank Him when He gives us Himself? In holy Communion we receive the gifts and the Giver! How precious, how holy the time after receiving Jesus Christ! St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used

to say: "The time after holy Communion is the most precious in our lives; it is the best time for negotiating with God and for inflaming our souls with His divine love." St. Teresa says: "Remain with Jesus Christ, profit by the favorable time of Communion to draw abundantly the treasures of His graces." The time is precious: Jesus is in the soul. "He that eateth my body and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him." When Jesus said to Zaccheus, "This day I must abide in thy house," Zaccheus received with joy his divine Guest, and Jesus rewarded his zeal by saying: "This day is salvation come to this house" (*Luke*, xix. 9). With holy joy and fervor ought we too receive our divine Guest bringing salvation to our souls. "Say to my soul, I am thy salvation" (*Ps.*). In a word, next to the supreme moment of death, the moments after holy Communion are the most important of our whole lives, because we then possess Jesus, our God, we bear in our bosoms the Lord of angels and archangels, we become his living tabernacles.

Immediate Thanksgiving—First Act after Communicating.

In the last section we left the soul at the altar rails, burning with divine love. Jesus her God is gently laid on the tongue, and received into the breast. That instant she bows down profoundly in love and adoration. She shuts her eyes and ears to the outer world, to all creatures, and absorbed in God, she loves, she adores, she thanks, she praises her divine Lord, and gives Him her whole being without reserve. After saying again and again, I love you, Jesus, my God, I wish to love you as you desire, I offer you the love of all holy souls on earth, of all the saints and blessed spirits in heaven, and of Mary Thy Mother, to supply my defects; the soul may cry out with the inspired Prophet, "O ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all for ever." "O ye servants of the Lord, bless the Lord. O ye spirits and souls of the Lord, O ye heavens and all ye powers of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all for ever" (*Daniel*, iii.). "Let us glorify His name together" (*Ps.*, xxxiii. 4). Union of the soul with Jesus in love and adoration is the first act after receiving holy Communion.

Second Act—Sorrow for Sin.

The soul possessing Jesus, and absorbed in the love of God, sees more clearly her past sins. She sees her black ingratitude to so good a God. She knows He will forgive and pardon. Often she repeats in the bitterness of her sorrow, "My good Jesus, I am sorry for all my past sins, because they displease and offend Thy infinite goodness." "The sins of my youth and my ignorance remember not, O Lord." "From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare thy servant" (*Ps.*). "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. Lord, I have sinned against heaven and against Thee" (*Luke*, xv. 18). With tears streaming from the eyes, with deep sorrow in the heart, with the firm resolve to sin no more, the prayer for pardon is whispered to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Sacred Heart dilates in mercy; from it the blood of redemption again flows on the soul. Jesus speaks, and the soul hears His sweet voice saying: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace, and sin no more."

Third Act—Petition.

The third part of thanksgiving after holy communion is perhaps the most important.

Our Blessed Redeemer has said: "Ask, and it shall be given to you; for every one that asketh receiveth" (*Luke*, xi. 9). And again: "If you shall ask anything in my name, that will I do. You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (*John*, xv. 7). Now, the time beyond all times for asking everything is after holy communion. St. Teresa says, that at that time Jesus remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, saying to her: "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" Jesus will refuse us nothing. Let us ask of Him grace to sin no more, to correct our past faults, to avoid every occasion of sin, whether place or person, grace to keep His commandments, grace to love Him, and the grace of graces—final perseverance. "I have found Him whom my soul loves; I hold Him fast; I will not let Him go" (*Cant.*, iii. 4). Yes; "I will not let Thee go till Thou hast blessed me" (*Gen.*, xxii. 26). Let no one then ever say: I am weak. Jesus is the Physician "that cures all sorts of diseases." He is the strength of the weak. Let no one say: I fear when I feel the sting of the flesh. Holy communion is "the wine springing forth virgins." Jesus is the chastity of the soul

and body. Let nobody say: My heart is cold, devoid of charity. Jesus is charity; Jesus is fire from heaven. "God is charity" (*John*, iv. 8). "My God is a consuming fire" *Deut.*, iv. 54). "I came to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled" (*Luke*, xii. 49). Lastly, let no one say: I am weary of the struggle so constant, unceasing. Look up; heaven is the prize; God is the reward. "I am thy reward exceeding great" (*Gen.*, xv. 1). "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." "God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things have passed away" (*Apoc.*, xxi. 4). Heaven is the prize. "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever, and I will raise him up on the last day" (*John*, vi. 55).

When we have asked and obtained everything for ourselves, let us think of and pray for others. Let us pray for the universal Church, that God may exalt and extend her over the world wide. A prayer for our own dear Irish Church, that every child of St. Patrick at home and abroad may be confirmed in the pure faith of Jesus Christ. Let us pray

for those sleeping, nay, dead in the grave of mortal sin. May a ray from heaven give them life to live unto God. Let us pray that heretics and schismatics may return to the bosom of the Church, to console the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us pray God to inspire our holy father the Pope with wisdom, sanctity, and fortitude, to resist the enemies of God, and to steer the bark of Peter safely to the haven of salvation. Let us pray Jesus, for the glory of His immaculate spouse the Church, to shower down abundant graces, eminent sanctity, the perfect spirit of their state, on bishops, priests, and religious all over the entire world. A parting prayer for those in the occasion of sin, that they may not offend Jesus; for those in their last agony, that they may depart in the peace of Jesus; for those departed in peace, but still in pain, that they may soon possess God in the bliss of paradise. Here what a field of intercessory prayer opens and expands before the soul of the pious communicant! What riches to acquire, what treasures to heap up, what glory to God, what consolation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

Jesus is in the heart! How many other holy thoughts, pious desires, heavenly inspira-

tions, will not the Lord Himself infuse into the soul! How sweet the conversation of the soul with Jesus! "Her conversation has no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness" (*Wis.*, viii. 16). How delicious to the soul the taste of this heavenly food! "The bread shall be the deliciousness of kings" (*Gen.*, xlix. 20). How rapturous the enjoyments, how supremely happy the moments of the soul "inebriated with delights," communing with, absorbed in Jesus! Well may she exclaim with the spouse in the Canticles: "My beloved to me and I to Him. I have found Him whom my soul loves: I hold Him fast, and will not let Him go" (*Cant.*, iii. 4). May Jesus inspire us all to thank Him as He deserves, and as we ought, after holy communion.

How much time ought the devout communicant to spend in thanksgiving? St. Liguori replies, at least a quarter of an hour. The time of thanksgiving will depend upon the fervor of each person. The saints have spent hours in meditation and prayer after holy communion. Every day we see holy souls who spend half an hour or more in thanksgiving. They find the time too short, and in their

fervor complain when the duties of their state in life tear them away from the altar. But in no case ought any one leave the altar without spending a quarter of an hour in fervent thanksgiving. If the communicant becomes distracted, the acts of thanksgiving found in every prayer book may be read with profit.

The pious communicant will always make a fervent thanksgiving: but how sad, if not sinful, is the thanksgiving, as well as the preparation, of some cold and careless Christians! They go to confession through custom or routine. The eve of holy communion they read no pious books: they pray but little, and think not of the sanctity of the body and blood of the Lord which they are to receive in the morning. The morning comes; they rise late, mutter a few hurried, thoughtless prayers, and proceed to the chapel. The dress is either careless and slovenly, or indecent and gaudy, as if they were going to a theatre to attract, and not to a church to pray. On the way they talk to everybody about everything except about God: no recollection, no aspirations. They arrive just in time not to be late for mass, but not in time to pray. They are weary of a long mass or sermon: they have

no relish for the Word of God. They receive the body and blood of Jesus; they retire to their places, but their vacant looks betray a distracted mind. They look about, appearing not to know what to do, nor to appreciate what God has done for them. Their lips may stir in prayer, but their hearts and minds are far from God. Mass is over, the blessing is given, they appear in a hurry to be first out of church: they carry Jesus in their hearts into the street or road. At once they begin to talk of everything profane, but not one word, not one affection or thought about God or the Blessed Eucharist they received. Dear Jesus! has not this too often happened? What an irreverence, what an outrage, what an insult to Thy Sacred Heart!

No wonder, then, that some of these careless communicants, if they were proud before, continue proud; if before they were drunkards, they get drunk again; if before they were impure, may fall again into the sin of impurity; if before they were quarrelsome, they will fight again; if before they led disedifying lives, they afterwards fail to give edification. Like the Israelites in the desert, they sin with the manna of heaven in their mouths. They have

reason to fear that the anger of God will overtake them. They abuse the grace of God, they treat with irreverence, we will not say positive insult, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. May heaven avert such miseries, and save all Christians from cold, tepid, and still more, from bad, sacrilegious communions!

Remote Thanksgiving.

The pious communicant may ask with the Royal Psalmist, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He hath rendered to to me?" (*Ps.*, cxv. 12). The best return to the Lord is the remote thanksgiving, which means to correct our faults, to amend our lives, and to acquire all virtues pleasing to Jesus Christ. After fervent prayer the pious communicant reluctantly leaves the altar, returns home from the nuptial banquet, joyous, happy, recollected, the spouse of the Lamb. "Thou art all beautiful, my love, and a stain is not in thee." The devout soul entertains her Divine Lord on the way home with holy affections and aspirations. That day she wants no society, her conversation is with God. This holy thought constantly recurs to her mind: this morning I have received the body and

blood of Jesus my God: may Jesus make me grateful. She reads pious books to nourish her still more with holy thoughts and holy affections, she spends more time in prayer, prayer of the heart, prayer full of deep devotion and fervor; she finds time for every thing, but above all, time for her duties to God.

How chaste, how modest! Her Lord "feeds among the lilies." A breath may fade and wither the lovely lily, the emblem of virginity. How chaste the eyes that in the morning beheld the Redeemer of the world, how chaste the tongue that in the morning was purpled with the blood of Jesus Christ, how chaste the heart that in the morning was the living tabernacle of the Son of God! Holy Communion—"the wine springing forth virgins," has filled the world with chaste youths and chaste virgins, who at all times have been the glory of the Church of God and living proofs of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Chaste souls! how they fly every occasion whether of place or person, dangerous to holy purity: an unbecoming word never escapes their lips. How often has the modest blush on the cheek of

the chaste youth or virgin hushed to silence the foul tongue of the gray-haired old sinner. Modesty attracts, modesty charms, modesty is the fruit of holy Communion.

The remote thanksgiving includes a firm resolve to keep God's commandments, to avoid sin, no matter at what cost, never to offend God by drunkenness, by anger and passion, or quarrels, or revenge, or by any other grievous sin whatsoever.

Conformity to the holy will of God in all things is the great fruit of holy Communion. In the greatest trials, in the darkest midnight of sorrow, when the hand of God is heaviest upon us, the soul finds consolation in this great truth—that all things happen and come from the hand of an all-wise and all-bountiful Providence. Divine Providence, which reckons the very hairs in our head, which decks in all their beauty the lilies of the fields, which feeds the birds of the air, will not forget souls made to God's own image and redeemed by the blood of His Son. All things are decreed or permitted by God. The sacred Scriptures say, "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God" (*Eccl.*, xi. 14). And again, "I am the Lord, I form the

light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil" (*Isa.*, xlv. 6). Let us, then, in all trials and crosses, in pain and sorrow, in poverty and suffering, in contempt and scorn of the world, in loss of all things, in sickness and death, say with holy Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and as it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done, blessed be the name of the Lord" (*Job*, i. 22). Let us say with our Blessed Saviour in His agony, "Not my will, O God, but thine be done."

We shall mention but one thing more, which is very important, and which ought to be kept before the mind in preparation for, and thanksgiving after, holy Communion—that is, to correct some fault into which we most frequently fall, and to acquire some virtue we need most. Each person knows that there is some sin, some fault into which he most frequently falls, some predominant passion, some imperfection which cools his love for God and hinders his advancement on the road to perfection. That may be pride or vanity, anger or ill-will, excess in eating or drinking, loss of precious time in idle unprofitable occupations, want of sufficient sensitive caution in words or looks, or with respect to places or

persons dangerous to holy purity, voluntary distractions in prayer, want of fervent preparation for the holy sacraments. The great thanksgiving then is to remove from our souls what we know is displeasing to the Almighty, to mortify our wills to-day in one thing, to-morrow in another, to correct our faults, and to offer up this to God as a thanksgiving. St. Aloysius spent three days in thanksgiving after holy Communion, and thus became a saint. If at each Communion we correct some one fault, acquire some new virtue, offer in sacrifice some one little thing that we know cools our fervor in the service of God, in a short time we shall become holy, pleasing to God, fervent, detached from creatures, resigned in all things to the holy will of God, devoted to prayer, united to God, so that we can say with the apostle, "I live indeed, but it is not I who live, but Jesus Christ lives in me" (*Gal.*, ii. 20).

Pious Reflection.

My soul! reflect. Holy Communion is Jesus, God-man. Holy Communion has sanctified all the saints. How often during thy life long hast thou too received Jesus? With what

fruit? My soul! yet so cold, so far from the perfection of the saints! Ask pardon of Jesus for the past abuse of grace; and that you may not in future abuse grace, keep the following resolution.

Resolution.

My Jesus, hidden God in the Holy Eucharist, I resolve to make, whenever I approach the holy table, the most fervent preparation the eve and morning of holy Communion, to spend at least a quarter of an hour in devout thanksgiving, and to endeavor to correct at each Communion some fault displeasing to the Almighty, or to acquire some virtue that I may stand in need of. O Sacred Host, fill my soul with grace to keep my resolutions.

CHAPTER XI.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

SECTION I.

Value of interior acts.

"Jesus," says St. Bernard, "is honey in the mouth, music in the ear, joy and jubilation in

the heart." "I have only time," cries out St. Francis of Sales, "to write the great name of salvation—Jesus. O could, O could we pronounce the holy name of salvation from our hearts, what sweetness would it diffuse to our souls" (*Ep.* 10). To think of Jesus makes us good, to praise Jesus makes us better, to love to possess Jesus makes us saints. "To be without Jesus," says the *Imitation*, "is a grievous hell, and to be with Jesus a sweet paradise." The soul that loves Jesus finds her greatest delight in thinking of Him, in praising and thanking Him, in advancing by every means His glory, in loving Him. No harm, no evil, no pain—shall we add sin?—can approach the soul whose affections are centered in and twined round the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Jesus unites us to Himself that we may ever think of Him and love Him. By the holy Communion we live in Jesus, and Jesus lives in us. "He that eateth my body and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him."

We have been treating of holy Communion, but how imperfectly! how imperfect our words, how embarrassed our thoughts, and our thoughts how much beneath the sublime ob-

ject to be conceived. It was the finite trying to comprehend the infinite, earth contemplating heaven, the creature overwhelmed in the dazzling light of the Creator. But the goodness of Jesus accepts our least good wishes: this leads us to our present chapter, Communion of desire, or spiritual Communion.

We sometimes forget the value of interior acts. The soul alone can love or offend God. "My soul," says the holy Mother of the Saviour, "doth magnify the Lord: my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (*Luke* i. 46). The exterior acts add nothing or little to the interior. These acts of the soul, whether for good or evil, can be multiplied at will beyond the power of reckoning, and in the midst of apparently the most distracting occupations. One act of the will, the work of an instant, transformed bright angels into hideous devils, and cast them from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, without a ray of hope for all eternity! Suppose the soul consents to an evil thought, it is the work of an instant, but the work is complete. In that second of time what has taken place? The Holy Ghost has departed; a foul devil takes

His place; the soul, before beautiful, is now hideous; before the friend of God, is now His enemy. In that one second she has forfeited heaven, and deserved hell for all eternity.

Reverse the picture, and you have the value of good thoughts. Good thoughts, good desires, good acts of the will, pierce heavens, please God, merit an increase of glory, and are written by the finger of God in the book of life. O the value of one act of love! Quicker than the lightning it is before God, and makes the soul the habitation of the Holy Ghost! These acts of the will—such as acts of love, sorrow, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, petitions for grace—never fatigue the mind nor interfere with our ordinary occupations, and can be multiplied each day in thousands. What glory they give to God! what showers of graces they bring down from heaven upon the soul! Amongst the holiest of interior acts is spiritual communion.

Section II.

What is Spiritual Communion?

St. Thomas answers (3 p. q. 30, a. 1. ad. 3): "Spiritual communion consists in an ardent desire of receiving Jesus Christ in the holy

sacrament, and in embracing Him with the same love as if you had actually received Him." By spiritual communion we invite Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament into our hearts by faith, desire, and love. We entertain our Divine Guest with holy affections. We thank, we praise, we bless Him, and beg His favors as if we had actually and sacramentally received Him. For the advantages and practice of this devotion we have no less authority than the holy Council of Trent, which says: "Some receive the holy Eucharist spiritually only; those, to wit, who, eating in desire that heavenly bread which is set before them, are, by a lively faith which worketh by charity, made sensible of the fruit and usefulness thereof" (Sess. xiii. xviii.). The saints and masters of the spiritual life extol the advantages of spiritual communion, tell us of the graces and blessings it confers upon the soul, and they exhort the faithful to the frequent practice of it. Blessed Leonard says: "Spiritual communion is a treasure which enriches the soul with inestimable wealth, and is capable of producing the very same graces as sacramental, and in some instances greater" (*Hidden Treasure*, p. 59). St. Liguori teaches

the same thing. Father Peter Faber used to say that spiritual communions are a very powerful help to receive the holy Eucharist with the proper dispositions. The venerable Alphonsus Rodriguez says: "God often bestows the same graces to those who communicate spiritually as to those who really receive under the species. Nay, it may sometimes happen that he who communicates spiritually may receive more graces than he that actually communicates" (*Christian Perfection*). It is true that sacramental communion is of itself of greater value: of its own nature, by its own intrinsic efficacy as a sacrament, it is capable of conferring more grace, of producing greater fruit, than the spiritual: yet if the latter be accompanied by better dispositions than the former, by more humility, more reverence, more respect, more love and desire, the spiritual communicant may deserve and receive greater grace than the sacramental. Spiritual communion has this advantage also, that it is free from the danger of vanity or vain glory, being hidden from the eyes of the world and known to God alone.

Section III.

How often can and ought the pious soul make Spiritual Communion.

Let us remark that to communicate spiritually the soul must be in the state of grace. The Council of Trent requires an ardent desire, lively faith, and *fervent charity.* "Some receive the holy Eucharist spiritually, those to wit who eating in desire that heavenly bread which is set before them, are by a lively faith which worketh by charity made sensible of the fruit and usefulness thereof." (Sess. xiii. c. viii.)

How often communicate spiritually? As often as God inspires the holy desire. First: Whenever you hear mass, at the moment the priest is about to receive Jesus Christ, invite Him into your soul, adore and love Him with your whole heart. Secondly: Whenever you visit the Blessed Sacrament—the oftener the better—make a spiritual communion. St. Liguori advises three spiritual communions each time we hear mass or visit the Blessed Sacrament. Thirdly: Every time, morning, noon, and night, you kneel down to pray, invite Jesus into your heart. Lastly: Every

hour of the day would not be too often—too often! every minute not often enough, to remember the love of Jesus for man in the Blessed Sacrament, to adore, to thank, to love Him. Spiritual communion has ever been the constant practice of the saints; it has sanctified them. Blessed Angela of the Cross used to make two hundred spiritual communions every day, and used to say, "If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating, I could scarcely live." So ardent her desire to receive Jesus.

We read in the lives of some of the saints, that to satisfy their vehement desire to receive the holy Eucharist, our divine Lord brought to them the sacred Host from heaven, sometimes by His own hands, to St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Liduina, and others; sometimes by the hands of angels or of His blessed Mother, as to St. Bonaventure, St. Stanislaus, St. Sylvester. Thus the sacred Host sometimes comes down from heaven to satisfy the ardent desires of holy souls. Thus has Jesus by signal miracles manifested His approbation of spiritual communion.

How are we to make Spiritual Communion?

No certain form is required. We may use any form we please. St. Thomas, as we before remarked teaches that spiritual communion consists in the desire of receiving Jesus Christ in the holy Sacrament. St. Liguori gives the following form: "I believe in Thee, O Jesus present in the most holy Sacrament. I love Thee. I desire to receive Thee. Come into my heart. I embrace thee. Do not ever more depart from me." St. Leonard gives another form: "Come, dearest Jesus, come into this my poor unhappy heart; come and satiate my longings; come and sanctify my soul; come, my sweetest Jesus, come."

The supernatural acts that precede and follow spiritual communion are of inestimable value. The spirit of God himself will dictate to the holy soul these *acts*, as well as the form. She will make an act of faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist; to prepare a dwelling-house for her spouse in her heart, she will elicit acts of sorrow for her sins; she will make acts of love and humility, and then invite Jesus to take

up His residence within her. And when Jesus is come, she entertains her divine Guest with holy affections; she adores, loves, thanks her Saviour, and performs the same acts she is accustomed to do after sacramental communion.

These holy spiritual communions can be made at all times and in all places. We need not be on our knees nor in the church; anywhere we are, whether in the streets, in our shops, at our work in the fields, walking the road, amidst the most distracting occupations, we can in the silence of our hearts, unknown to the world, turn to the tabernacle and invite Jesus into our hearts. When we awake in the morning let Jesus occupy our first thoughts, let us invite Him into our hearts, thank Him for His protection during the night, and invoke His blessing for the day; every hour of the day, and even frequently during each hour, let us make spiritual communions: and at night when we retire to rest, let Jesus be our last thought. Let us again invite Him into our hearts, and thus like St. Stephen, "fall asleep inthe Lord. "O how happy such a day, the soul ever in the presence of God, united with Jesus, breathing

silent love to its Maker. How many the supernatural interior acts of one day, and each act meriting an eternal weight of glory? We have said before, one act of love makes her the habitation of the Holy Ghost. Yes, could but one ray of love penetrate hell, it would light up the dark dungeons of the damned, send back to heaven the fallen angels, extinguish the burning flames, and transform hell into paradise. The reward of one act of divine love is God himself, for by it we merit the possession, the enjoyment of God for all eternity.

May Jesus give us all a love for spiritual communions. "Custom," says the *Imitation of Christ*, "is overcome by custom." Let us have holy customs. Let us pray for the custom of spiritual communions. Let us begin it, continue it, and fix in our minds certain times of the day to practice it, such as morning, noon, and night, at the Angelus, when we go to mass or visit the blessed Sacrament, when the clock strikes, etc.

In a short time it will become a holy habit, and then the source of extraordinary graces and blessings to our souls. "Spiritual communion," concludes St. Leonard, "inflames

the soul with the love of God, nay, unites it to God, disposes it to receive His most signal favors, and enriches it with graces, merits, and every good" (*p.* 60).

Pious Reflection.

My soul! how divinely inventive the love of Jesus in the holy Eucharist! Not only canst thou receive Him every day if thou art worthy, but thou canst receive Him spiritually every hour of the day. At all times and in all places Jesus is willing to come to thee at thy invitation, to shower upon thee His graces and blessings. How often hast thou neglected this holy practice?

In gratitude to Jesus, and in love to the blessed sacrament, pray for grace to keep the following resolution:

Resolution.

My Jesus, all love and goodness in the holy Eucharist, I resolve to make spiritual communions whenever I hear Mass, visit the Blessed Sacrament, or recite the Angelus; whenever I say in the *Pater Noster*, "give us this day our daily bread;" it will be my first act in the morning, my last at night. And I wish

and desire at each spiritual communion, and at each moment of my life, to offer to Thee, my Jesus, the holiest love and the holiest acts that have been performed, and that will be performed by the saints on earth and blessed in heaven, including Thy ever holy Mother. I place this resolution in the tabernacle of the blessed sacrament, begging grace to keep it.

CHAPTER XII.

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The more we meditate on the love of our blessed Saviour, the more boundless it appears. It is like eternity, without beginning and without end. The Blessed Sacrament is the infinite ocean of God's love, the deeper we drink of its salutary waters, the more inexhaustible it becomes; the more we endeavor to fathom its depth, the farther the bottom recedes from us. The love of Jesus, infinite though it be, might appear to be satisfied by giving Himself to us as our sacrifice in the Mass, and by giving us His body and blood as our food in the holy Communion; but no,

he must be near us, to watch over us, to give us courage and strength, nay, to raise us up when we fall. How is this possible? It is possible only to God, to whom nothing is impossible. God's love alone could invent the means. What are they? Jesus ever present on our altars in the most adorable sacrament! Divine invention! Is it possible, then, that Jesus remains still on earth after His ascension? Possible and true. Yes, on our altars, in the tabernacle, in the ciborium, day and night, is ever present Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created and redeemed us—who on the last day will be our judge, and, we trust, our reward in heaven. O Christians, envy not the just in heaven: except that you cannot love God as they love Him, you have in your humble chapel all they possess in paradise; they see Jesus face to face, you see Jesus not less really with the eyes of faith; on the altar you have Jesus, the lamp, the life, the glory of the blessed in heaven. How beautiful and full of faith was the reply of St. Louis, King of France, when invited to behold Jesus Christ, who appeared in the consecrated Host under the form of an infant: "Let those," said the holy king,

who do not believe by faith, go and see; I believe more firmly than if I saw Jesus Christ with my eyes." Such, too, is our firm faith. We kneel before the Blessed Sacrament with the same absolute certainty of the presence of Jesus Christ, as the saints have who see Him face to face in heaven.

Section I.

The love of Jesus dwelling on our altars.

In instituting the holy sacrifice and sacrament, our Lord expressed His tender love when He said to His disciples: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer" (*Luke* xxii. 15). So He tells us, in the most touching accents, His love and desire to remain with us day and night on our altars. "My desire is to be with the children of men" (*Prov.* viii. 31). Jesus, though entertained by the sweet canticles of saints and angels in heaven, finds His delights among the children of men on earth. "O men," says St. Teresa, "how can you offend a God who declares that among you He finds His delights?" "Come to me," says Jesus, from the tabernacle, "all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh

you" (*Matt.* xi. 28). O happy invitation! Come to me, your God, the fountain of all goodness; come, fear not—approach all without exception; but especially come, you poor, you sick, you sorrowing, you in pain, in grief, in tears, you in sin and guilt, I will not cast you off. I will give consolation to the afflicted and sorrowing; I will give balm to the wounded heart; I will raise up the despairing, and pardon the repenting sinner. O, sweet voice of Jesus from the tabernacle!

Again, our blessed Lord says from the tabernacle: "This is my rest for ever and for ever; here I will dwell, for I have chosen it" (*Ps.* cxxxi. 14). Jesus has chosen His rest amongst us; on the altar He dwells. He says: "My eyes and my heart shall be there always" (1 *Kings* ix. 3). All can approach and speak to Jesus on the altar. Few can address the princes of this earth. The poor cannot speak to the king; none but nobles can approach the sovereign; but all, the poor as well as the nobles, can see and speak to, at all times, the King of kings, Jesus Christ, in the holy sacrament. Let us address the words of the inspired writer to every Christian: "Rejoice and praise, O thou

habitation of Sion! for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel" (*Isa.* xii. 6).

Section II.

Devotion of the saints to the Blessed Sacrament.

To cite the loving sayings of the saints in their ardent devotion to the blessed Sacrament, would fill and have filled volumes. The blessed Sacrament was the life of their souls, and the soul of their ministry, and the source of their sanctity.

St. Thomas says: "The Blessed Sacrament is not only the greatest of all God's miracles, but an abridgment of all the wonders He has ever wrought." He calls it a "sacrament of love; a pledge of love" (*Opusc.* 68). "Behold," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "that Lord, whom the world cannot contain, makes Himself prisoner in the holy sacrament." "No tongne," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "can express the greatness of the love which Jesus Christ bears to our souls. Hence, that His absence from us might not be an occasion of forgetting Him, this Spouse, before his departure from this world, left us a memorial of his love—this

most holy sacrament—in which He Himself has remained.

We shall quote but one more—St. Liguori. All the writings of this great saint breathe the most tender love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. He says: "On this earth we cannot find a more brilliant jewel or a more lovely treasure than Jesus in the sacrament. Certainly, after the frequentation of the sacrament, the adoration of Jesus in the holy Eucharist is, of all devotions, the most acceptable to God and useful to us." Again the saint says: "Be assured that, of all the moments of your life, the time which you spend in devotion before this most divine sacrament will be that which will give you greatest support during life, and the greatest consolation at the hour of your death and for all eternity; and be persuaded that you will gain more in a quarter of an hour spent in prayer before the holy Eucharist, than in all other spiritual exercises of the day." This saint, who lived a secular to the age of twenty-six, attributes his vocation to the Church to the visits which, when a young man, he used to make to the blessed sacrament. We shall give his own words: "Through gratitude to my Jesus in

the holy sacrament, I must proclaim to all who read this little book, that, in remuneration of my cold and imperfect visits to the blessed sacrament, I am now removed from the dangers of the world, where unfortunately I lived to my twenty-sixth year. Believe me," continues the saint, "that all is folly; feasts, comedies, parties of pleasure, amusements. These are the goods of the world; but they are goods full of gall and thorns. Believe one who has had experience of them, and is now weeping for them. Be assured that Jesus Christ will give more consolation to those who remain with recollection before the holy sacrament than they could receive from all the pleasures and pastimes of the world" (*Intro. to Visits*). The saints excelled, some in one virtue, some in another; but the most tender love for the blessed sacrament was common to all. The hours before the altar were the most precious, the most holy—the consolation, the happiness of their lives. May Jesus give us all this holy love for the blessed sacrament!

Section III.

How often ought we visit Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist?

We cannot visit our blessed Lord too often; it will depend upon our love and devotion; time will not fail where there is a good will. If we love Jesus, we shall be drawn insensibly to the altar; we shall find our supreme happiness in looking to the tabernacle. We shall find the "Courts of the Lord" attractive; we shall cry out with the prophet: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord" (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 1). But alas, how often the courts of the Lord are lonely and abandoned! The palaces of kings and princes are thronged with visitors and courtiers, who pay them homage; and shall the palace of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, be deserted and forgotten? Jesus is on the altar, how few visit him! Jesus is in the church, and the church how lonely! Jesus sits in the tabernacle, as on a throne of love, to bless all, to bestow His grace: how few come to receive His blessing, to beg His favors! "His delights are to be

with the sons of men;" how few men find their delights with Jesus! O Lord, forgive our past ingratitude and coldness; for the time to come we shall not be among the ungrateful: we will visit Thee, O Lord. How often? St. Mary Magdalen, of Pazzi, used to visit the Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times every day. St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, when exhausted from his labors of the day in saving souls, found repose and refreshment at the foot of the altar, where he spent the greater part of the night in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. St. Francis Regis, the great French missionary, after having spent the entire day in preaching and hearing confessions, at night found repose absorbed in prayer before the tabernacle; and when sometimes he found the church shut, he knelt and remained outside the door in cold and rain, to adore even at a distance his beloved Lord. St. Aloysius wished to remain always in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. A sainted nun being asked, how she could spend so many hours day and night before the altar, replied: "I could remain there for all eternity."

Poor we, how unlike the saints, how far from God, and still God so near. If we have

not love to spend hours, to spend one hour, let us resolve, in gratitude to Jesus, to pay one visit of a quarter of an hour every day to our beloved Lord. A quarter of an hour, how short; yet how long the day, how long the night! How much time spent in idle conversation! How much valuable time frittered away in doing or saying what means nothing? How little then a quarter of an hour for Jesus, who remains the whole day on the altar for us. The hours before the Blessed Sacrament, the hours given to God, how precious at the hour of death! "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is;" yes; taste and see the sweetness of the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and you will find the happiest moments of your life are those spent on the foot of the altar; you will find yourself unhappy and disconsolate if only one day in the year you were deprived of the privilege and blessing of visiting your divine Lord in the tabernacle. "Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and for ever" (*Ps.* xxxiii. 5).

Section IV.

How employ the time of our visit to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament?

As in hearing mass, and in thanksgiving after holy Communion, so also in visits to the Blessed Sacrament, each person does best to follow the inspirations of grace, and to adopt the method best suited to his capacity, and which best excites his piety and devotion. The acts we are about to suggest will be useful to all, and ought to occupy more or less of the time of our visit. We kneel reverentially and modestly before the altar; we excite our faith; we make an act of firm faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the most holy sacrament; my Jesus, my God, I believe Thou art really present in the most holy Sacrament of the altar. Our first act is divine firm faith. We then make a spiritual communion by inviting Jesus Christ into our hearts, and when Jesus comes into the soul our second acts are

Acts of Adoration, Love, Thanksgiving.

Adoration, love, thanksgiving to Jesus? What thoughts crowd upon the mind! God,

so great, so infinite; we, so little, so worthless. God, so pure, so holy; we, so sinful, so cold. What shall we do? We invite heaven and earth to join us; we offer to Jesus the adoration, love, and thanksgiving of the saints on earth and blessed in heaven. Thus united with holy souls, so dear to Jesus, we take courage, we look with more confidence but deeper humility to the tabernacle; we say in the very depth of our souls: My Jesus, I adore Thee in the most holy Sacrament. I pay the homage of my understanding to Thee as my God, my Creator, my Redeemer, my All. We love Jesus; we offer to Him our hearts, with their affections now and for ever; we never get tired repeating: I love Thee, Jesus, with my whole heart and soul and strength and mind.

What shall we say of thanksgiving? Thanksgiving to Jesus ought to end only with our lives; we owe Him everything. Before the altar, in the silence of the sanctuary, is the place to remember the benefits of God, and to thank Him. We first thank Him for giving us Himself in the mass for our sacrifice, for giving us His body and blood in the Holy Communion as our food, for remaining day

and night in the tabernacle, for permitting, nay, inviting us to visit Him.

We thank Him for all the graces we have received from all the masses we have ever heard, from all the Holy Communions we have ever made, from all the visits we have ever paid Him. We thank His patience, that spared us when we deserved hell a thousand times; we thank His mercy, that gave us life when we were dead in sin; we thank Jesus for His secret hidden graces, of which we know nothing, but on which, on the day of judgment, we will find depended our eternal salvation; we thank Him for the faith of St. Patrick, the true faith of Jesus Christ: in a word, we will desire to thank Him as He deserves. No prayer, says St. Augustine, is more beautiful than "Deo gratias."

Acts of Reparation.

A spirit of reparation is an essential part of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. We cannot love God without being pained by sin even in others. We cannot love Jesus without being wounded by the insults offered to his sacred heart in the sacrament of his love. Of this our Blessed Lord bitterly complained to his

chosen servant, Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. "Behold," said he, "this heart which has loved men so much, that it has spared nothing, even to the exhausting and consuming itself, to testify its love; and yet in return I receive from the greater number but contempt, coldness, ingratitude, irreverence, sacrilege, in the sacrament of My love." To encourage every one to a spirit of reparation, our Blessed Lord added, "Upon those who will render Me this honor (that is reparation), or cause it to be rendered to Me, I promise thee that My heart will expand to diffuse upon them the influence of its divine love." This promise of Jesus Christ, what a strong motive to induce us to the practice of reparation!

Reparation for Ourselves.

We all, even the very best amongst us, have sufficient reason to make Reparation for our own sins and Ingratitude to Jesus Christ. Kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, the soul in peace, alone with God, the noise of the world hushed in silence, we shall see our sins in the light of the sanctuary. Our countless sins! The sins of our youth, the sins of our maturer age, the sins of our gray hairs;

the sins of thought, word, and deed, the sins of omission, the sins occasioned in others: what a multitude rises up before the soul, and each sin a direct insult to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Again our coldness, our irreverence at mass and Holy Communuion, our neglect of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament—shall we say our sacrileges? May Jesus save us and all Christians from the greatest of sins, Sacrilege. Here we find sufficient matter for reparation. The true reparation is to weep before Jesus over our sins, to beg of him tears of sorrow, that He Himself may wash away our sins in His precious Blood. "I will recount to Thee, O Lord," says the Prophet, "all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (*Isaias* v. 38).

Reparation for Others.

The pious soul will endeavor to make reparation to Jesus for the sins of others. The sins of a wicked world, the insults offered to the Blessed Sacrament during the last nineteen centuries, would make an angel weep; all these Jesus foresaw, when for us he instituted the sacrament of His love. Let us try to make reparation to Him for all the sacrileges ever committed—sacrileges, the greatest

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blasphemies towards the blessed sacrament may for ever cease; that the light of God's truth may shine upon heretics and infidels, to believe in the love of the blessed Eucharist. We pray that the love of Jesus be enkindled in the hearts of cold, bad Catholics, to venerate as they ought the holy mysteries. We pray for the poor pagans, that the seeds of Christianity sown in the blood of the martyrs and labors of holy missionaries, may produce the rich harvest of souls; that all nations may know and adore the true God; and we recommend to Jesus, in the blessed sacrament, our holy Father the Pope, the Universal Church, our own dear Irish Church, the exiles of Erin, that none of them may ever lose the faith of St. Patrick.

The soul thus occupied with the interest of Jesus in herself and others, how fast time will fly! A half hour or more will appear only a moment, so sweet is the society of God. "His conversation has no bitterness, His company no tediousness" (*Wis.* viii, 14). How happy the soul in the presence of her Beloved! How many looks of love to the tabernacle! None but God sees the secret currents of grace from the sacred heart of Jesus to the heart of the

pious penitent. None but God and the pious soul know the silent inspirations from the tabernacle. "Give me," says St. Augustine, "a lover, and he will understand what I mean."

The blessing of daily mass, frequent communion, and daily visits to the most holy sacrament, is the privilege of those living in towns. May they avail themselves of it! Those living in the country, far away from the church where the blessed sacrament is preserved, are deprived of these heavenly favours. How are they to manifest their love and gratitude by visits to the blessed sacrament? In the first place, they have an opportunity of satisfying their devotion to the blessed sacrament on all Sundays and holidays, both before and after mass. On these days the priest carries in his bosom to the chapel the Holy of holies. The lighted candle reminds the faithful of the real presence of Jesus on the altar, and there he remains in all his love. Here is a good opportunity to pay a loving and fervent visit to Jesus, to make up for one's absence during the week. Again, people from the country often come to town on business. They should never lose so good an opportunity of looking into the church to

pay a visit to their beloved Lord. To come in specially to pray before the blessed sacrament would be time not lost but gained, time well spent, time precious at the hour of death.

Besides these and other occasions of actual visits to the blessed sacrament, the pious soul can supply all defects of opportunity by visits in spirit. In a former chapter we have seen the advantages of spiritual communion: so also can we pay pious visits in spirit to Jesus in the most holy sacrament. And this holy practice will draw down showers of graces upon our souls. The devout Christian in his humble home, whether by the bleak mountain's side or far away in the bog, can enter the closet of his heart, and kneel in spirit before his Lord. With the eyes of faith he sees Jesus on the altar; he adores and loves him; he begs his graces and blessings, he elicits the very same acts, and derives the very same advantages, as if he had been really in the actual presence of the blessed sacrament. These spiritual visits can be made at all times and in all places, and are recommended to all, but especially to those living at a distance from the church. How the Sacred Heart of

Jesus will dilate to diffuse his graces upon those who thus far away from the altar of his love still remember him; who thus make their hearts living tabernacles of the blessed sacrament—tabernacles more precious than those of marble, silver, or gold; and who convert, so to speak, their modest dwellings into churches for the holy of holies! Sacred heart of Jesus! grant to us all the grace of this holy practice.

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! the infinite love of Jesus in the holy Eucharist; his love in the mass, in holy communion, in the blessed sacrament: for thy sake Jesus remains day and night on the altar, to hear thy petitions, to cure thy diseases, to bless thee, to make thee happy, "to refresh thee." How often hast thou been irreverent! How often hast thou forgotten thy God? In love to Jesus, and in reparation to his sacred heart, make and keep the following resolutions:

RESOLUTIONS.

My Jesus! ever present day and night on the altar, full of mercy and love, I resolve, first, never to pass by a church in which the

blessed sacrament is kept without uncovering and bowing my head, and saluting and adoring in my heart the holy Eucharist. Secondly, when I enter such a church, to genuflect to the ground in profound adoration, saying: "I adore and love Thee, Jesus Christ, in the most holy sacrament." Thirdly, I resolve to pay a visit of at least a quarter of an hour every day of my life to the Blessed Sacrament. And, lastly, when from any cause I am deprived of this blessing of every day kneeling before Thy altar, I resolve to make amends by visiting Thee in Spirit. Jesus in the blessed sacrament! grant me grace to keep these holy resolutions.

CHAPTER XIII.

BENEDICTION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT. HOLY VIATICUM.

Section I.

Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament.

We love to be blessed. We reverentially kneel to get a parent's blessing. How we covet the blessing of God's minister! But

what to get the blessing of God Himself! Is such a heavenly thing on earth? Is such happiness possible? Yes; Jesus in the holy Eucharist is on earth, and benediction of the most holy sacrament is the blessing of Jesus Christ—God himself. Oh! the love of Jesus in the blessed sacrament! Not only can we visit him whenever we please, but He himself stretches out from the remonstrance his divine arms to bless us, and shower upon us his graces.

In the Old Testament we find the patriarchs and prophets blessed God's people, and the children of Isreal appreciated the blessings of these holy men as special signs of God's love and care. Thus Melchisedech, King of Salem and priest of the most high God, blessed Abraham; "blessed him and said: Blessed be Abram by the most high God, who created heaven and earth" (*Gen.* xiv. 19). The patriarchs, dying, invoked the blessing of heaven upon their children: "May God," says Jacob, "in whose sight my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, bless these boys" (*Gen.* xlviii. 15). Moses, at the close of life, stretched his hands over the kneeling twelve tribes of Israel, and blessed them.

Solomon "turned his face and blessed all the multitude of Israel" (II. *Par.* vi. 3). God even commanded his servants to bless his people. "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Say to Aaron and his sons, Thus shall you bless the children of Israel. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord show his face to thee and have mercy on thee. The Lord turn his countenance to thee and give thee peace" (*Num.* vi. 22). The blessings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament are still more precious. "Blessed be God," says St. Paul, "and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (*Eph.* i. 3). The last act of Jesus Christ on earth, before his ascension into heaven, was to bless his disciples: "Lifting up his hands he blessed them. And it came to pass whilst he blessed them he departed from them, and was carried up to heaven" (*Luke* xxiv. 49).

How beautiful the practices and traditions of the Catholic Church! They show that she alone fulfils the promises, and is the reality of the types of the Old Law. Like the children of Israel five thousand years ago, we today kneel to get the blessing of an aged pa-

rent: we group round the bed of a dying father, we reverentially kiss his hand, and beg his benediction: in after life we call it to mind; it makes us happy. Abraham, God's chosen servant, knelt to get the blessing of Melchisedech, priest of the Most High. We, too, love the blessing of Christ's anointed priest, of whom Melchisedech was the type. More precious still is the blessing of a bishop, who is a more exalted minister of the Lord. But what shall we say to get the blessing of the Pope, the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth? The fervent Christian travels over thousands of miles by land and sea, braves the perils of the snows and the deep, to get the blessing of the holy Father. Conceive the feelings of the man of faith, who, after the fatigues and perils of a long journey, catches the first sight of the supreme visible head of the Church. He sees for the first time the Pope, whose name he lisped on his mother's knee, and loved his life long. The Pope! Christ's Vicar on earth, the successor of St. Peter, the ruler of two hundred millions of souls, the infallible teacher of God's Church. He looks into his face; he kneels and kisses his feet; the Pope lifts his eyes to heaven, stretches out his arms, and

blesses him! It is enough: fatigue and labor are forgotten: the tear of joy and love starts to the eye; the soul is stirred to its centre with the deepest emotions; the heart is full to overflowing; he is recompensed; it is an epoch in his life; he returns home happy, never to forget, though unable to describe, the feelings of that precious moment. Such is the Pope's blessing. Thank God we have got it.

These blessings, so dear, so precious, so coveted; but still what are they compared with the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament? The Pope is but a man, the Blessed Sacrament is God; all is expressed in one word—the Pope's benediction is the blessing of man; benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is the blessing of God Himself.

To receive the blessing of God Himself we need not travel to Rome, we need not undergo fatigues by sea and land, we need not expose ourselves to the perils of the Alpine mountains: in the very midst of us, so near our homes, in our little modest chapels, several times a month, if not every week, we can get the blessing of Jesus Christ—God himself. How blessed the inspiration that has

led the Church of God to grant us this consolation. Have we ever neglected benediction? Have we appreciated it as we ought? May heaven grant us the grace to know and esteem its value.

There are few ceremonies in the Church which so touchingly speak to the heart as benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. What a blessed and delightful sight our churches present at benediction! The richest decorations are lavished upon the altar. It is bedecked with choicest flowers, and the most exquisite roses of the garden are not lovely enough to blush before the Lord who gave to them their tint and beauty. Blazing lights shed their rays around, and the odor of sweet incense ascends as prayer before the Lord of hosts. But all eyes and all hearts are centred in one object—Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the holy of holies enthroned in the remonstrance. Oh, how heavenly to gaze on the Sacred Host, and like the blessed Virgin to behold and adore and love our God. The brilliant decorations, the gorgeous robes of God's minister, the waves of smoking incense, the strains of religious music, the sweetness of sacred hymns, the joyous peals of bells

mingling with the deep, solemn notes of the organ; everything tends to raise the soul of man to heaven, to touch and melt the heart to love, to make us forget earth, and to exclaim with the disciples when they beheld the glory of Jesus on Mount Thabor, when "His face did shine like the sun, and his garment became as white as snow: Lord, it is good for us to be here" (*Mat.* xvii. 4).

In a moment the music ceases, every voice is hushed, the peals of the organ die away, every head is bowed, God alone speaks; and amidst this solemn silence the priest elevates the remonstrance, "The loftiness of man is lowered down, and the Lord alone exalted" (*Is.* ii. 17). The Blessed Sacrament is raised aloft, and the blessing of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, descends upon the heads and hearts of the fervent congregation. What scene so calculated to inspire the soul of man with the most exalted notions of the majesty, goodness, and love of God. We see, and touch, and feel, so to speak, the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Section II.

Benediction on Corpus Christi.

For the last three centuries heretics have spared no species of blasphemy and insult to Jesus Christ in the sacrament of His love. On the feast of Corpus Christi the Church of God invites her children to profess their faith publicly, and to make reparation to the Son of God in the holy Eucharist. This feast the Church celebrates with all possible splendor and spiritual joy. "That this most sublime and venerable sacrament," says the Council of Trent, "should be celebrated with special veneration and solemnity . . . . that all Christians may testify their gratitude towards their common Lord and Redeemer, for so infallible and truly divine a benefit. And so, indeed, did it behoove victorious truth to celebrate a triumph over falsehood and heresy, that thus her adversaries, at the sight of so much splendor, and in the midst of so great joy of the universal Church, may either pine away weakened and broken, or, touched with shame and confounded, at length repent" (*Sess.* xiii. c. 5). What a glorious profession

of faith is the procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on this feast in Catholic countries? The joy-bells usher in the happy feast; from every window float in the breeze the richest hangings of embroidered purple and gold; the pavements are strewn with green leaves and flowers; the streets are spanned with arches of evergreens; altars, which nature and art combine to decorate, are erected in the most conspicuous places. The procession moves through the streets. What a heavenly sight! First the little convent children, whose souls are as white and pure as the dress they wear, then the little boys, waving their beautiful banners, then the various confraternities, bearing the images of their respective patron saints, then the holy Levites of the seminary, the secular and regular clergy in their richest vestments, and lastly, the prelates in their Roman purple, the king or emperor in his royal robes, vie with the peasant to do honor to their common God. The hands of innocence scatter rose-leaves in showers, and swing the smoking censers before their Lord. The Holy of Holies is borne under a magnificent canopy, and the God of armies moves along in triumph, even as he

made his triumphant entry in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Hundreds of sweet voices, the roaring of cannon, and the pealing of bells, proclaim to mankind that Jesus lives and reigns in the Holy Eucharist.

Now the thunder of the cannon ceases, the bells are silent, music and song die away, profound silence reigns through the vast crowd, the prelate and the peer, the prince and the peasant, bend their knees and bow their heads before their God; from the altar under the canopy of heaven, the benediction of Jesus Christ descends upon the enraptured multitude. What pencil could adequately sketch such an imposing scene?—a scene which impresses upon the soul the noble solemnity of the Catholic faith in the God of the Eucharist. In the blessed Sacrament as in the flesh "Jesus goes through the cities and towns teaching," "doing good," bestowing His graces and blessings.

What a privilege from heaven is benediction of the most holy Sacrament, to kneel before Jesus, to join the angels in adoring him, and to get his precious blessing! But this blessing, alas! how little esteemed, how little valued by some cold and faithless Chris-

tians. May Jesus warm their cold hearts and animate their weak faith. May the rays of divine love, issuing from the remonstrance, penetrate our hearts, and kindle in our souls such ardent love for the blessed Sacrament, that we may never omit even one opportunity in our whole lives of getting the benediction of Jesus Christ in the most holy Eucharist.

Section III.

The most holy Viaticum.

O secrets of the love of Jesus! From the cradle to the grave His Providence shields us, His mercy surrounds us. Even long before we reposed in the cradle or on the bosom of our mother the hand of God conducted us in the path of salvation. There are millions of pagans who never heard of the sweet name of Jesus, who adore the most loathsome creatures for the Creator; that we are not among the number, thanks to God alone. There are millions of infidels, schismatics, and heretics who are outside the true Church, the only fold of salvation, who are "tossed about by every wind of doctrine," who are on board a sinking vessel without helm or pilot, every moment in danger of being swallowed up in

the abyss of a miserable eternity. May God bring them back to the Catholic Church built upon a rock, which neither waves, nor storms, nor sin, nor error, nor earth, nor hell can ever shake. That we are not amongst the number let us give glory to God, saying with the Royal Psalmist: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory" (*Ps.* cxii.). Yes; have we often thanked God for giving us Catholic parents, from whom we drank in the faith with our mother's milk? At baptism God put his indelible seal upon our souls to mark us for himself, and the waters of regeneration made us the children of Jesus, the heirs of heaven, even before we knew it. The enemy watches the dawn of reason to rob us of our baptismal innocence. God has prepared us by instruction and example to conquer the foul spirit. Age advances: the scandals of the world threaten our innocence: we are weak: confirmation makes us strong and brave soldiers of Christ. Our passions grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength. We require more aid. Jesus gives his body and blood to purify our souls, to chasten our bodies, to unite us to himself. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my

blood, abideth in me and I in him." At first communion—we never forget the happy day—we give our young hearts and our first love to Jesus in the holy Sacrament.

Alas! many of us sin: deep and deadly the fall, dark the dye of our guilt. Seventy times seven times number not our crimes. We are dead in sin; all is lost! O the goodness of God! by the sacrament of penance we can rise again, recover our lost innocence, make our peace with God, again become the children of Jesus and the heirs of heaven. Every day of our lives let us thank and bless the mercy of God. God has perhaps blessed us with youth, manhood, nay, gray hairs. During these years the most fierce passions assail us; the sins of the world scandalize us; the assaults of the evil spirits are unceasing by night and by day; trials and sufferings multiply round us; sorrows and tribulation darken our lives; every moment we are on the brink of the precipice, and hell is yawning wide to swallow us up. Who has been our support, our strength, our salvation in life? Jesus in the holy Eucharist. When our passions assail us, he rises, "stills the storm; a calm ensues." When the devil tempts us, Jesus is their terror; the

fallen spirit of sin and death cannot enter the soul whose door has been sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal Lamb in holy communion. "The Son of God," says the apostle, "appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 *Ep. St. John* iii. 8). In the midst of sorrows and tribulations, trials and persecutions, Jesus in the blessed sacrament is our comfort and hope, our shield and victory. Courageously we say with the Psalmist: "If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident; If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear, since thou art with me" (*Ps.* xvi. 3). "If I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no danger, for thou art with me." "I am with him, says the Lord, in tribulation; I will deliver him, I will glorify him" (xc. 15). No evil can harm us when Jesus is with us; and in the blessed sacrament he is with us all days, even to the consummation of the world. He will save us from all dangers, "of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark: of invasion of the noon-day devil. A thousand shall fall at thy feet, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh to thee.

Then shall no evil come to thee, nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling. Because thou, O Lord, art my hope, thou hast made the Most High thy refuge" (*Ps.* xc.). The blessed Eucharist is our food, our strength, our life when living, but how express the tender love of Jesus to us when sick and dying?

Death is approaching. The final struggle is at hand. All is to be lost or gained. Jesus is to be robbed of the fruit of his passion and death; the Church is to lose all her care during a life long; and the soul is to forfeit paradise: or one spirit more, bought so dearly, cared so tenderly, is to enjoy heaven, and bless God for ever in glory. What a solemn moment, on the issue of which depends an eternity of bliss or woe! Does Jesus forget us? Far from it. His grace to us is increased tenfold when we tenfold want it. Perhaps there is no other manifestation of God's love for man so touching, so merciful, and so necessary, as the holy Viaticum. The holy Viaticum simply means, that when we cannot go to the altar to receive Jesus in the holy communion, Jesus Himself comes to us; comes to our bedside; comes at the time when beyond all others we need Him most, at the awful hour of death, to help us

on the way to heaven. Let us meditate on this last proof of the love of Jesus in the blessed sacrament.

After a long life, and perhaps a sinful life, the last illness overtakes us when we least expect it. "At what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come" (*Luke* xii. 40); nay, come "like a thief in the night." For a time the sick man thinks of nothing but life and recovery. Soon, symptoms but too fatal tell him the end is at hand. Pains too often excruciating multiply and afflict his body; cold languor benumbs his limbs, his eyes become dim, he feels strange sensations he never felt before. His soul! A thousand thoughts never known before darken his soul, already weakened by the pains and sickness of his body. First, his life—his manifold sins—graces, invitations, calls of heaven resisted—talents and gifts of God misemployed—perhaps the holy sacraments abused—all crowd before the mind. God's awful judgments rise up before him; beyond the grave no mercy, but justice; he must stand face to face before the Almighty, in whose sight the angels themselves are not pure, to render an account of even every idle word. Who has not reason to fear? The eye

of the soul now sees what it never saw before —the two gates of eternity, one opening to eternal bliss, the other to eternal woe.

Nor is this all: the violent temptations of the devils heighten the terrors of the scene. The Council of Trent says: "At the hour of death the demons strain every nerve to damn the departing soul." If at all times "they go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour," at the last struggle their number and their assaults are increased tenfold to keep the soul in sin, or draw her into sin, and bear her away in triumph to hell. "The devil," says St. John, "is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (*Apoc.* xii. 12). The room of the dying man is filled with devils. They put before the soul the mockery of death-bed repentance, the enormity of past sins, the abuse of God's mercy; they whisper despair, and if they instil it, their victory is complete. Amid the thoughts, temptations, and terrors that wring the soul with anguish, the dying man feels that time is ebbing fast, and that the lamp of life is flickering, soon to expire. Supreme awful moment, on which hangs eternity! Friends speak consolation, human

consolation! Vain words that fall upon the ear, but reach not the heart. God is wanted, and God in his mercy comes. Jesus in the Viaticum enters the house of the dying sinner. At the presence of the Redeemer the angels of darkness fly away in rage and confusion. During his mortal life the presence of Jesus struck such terror into the demons that they raised a cry of rage, begged of him not to torment them so cruelly, and, despite their pride, they asked as a favor to be allowed to enter the loathsome swine, and precipitated themselves into the sea. They now recognize the same God, and into the darkness of hell they fly in confusion, robbed of their expected prey.

The minister of God, breathing the charity and mercy of his Divine Master for the sinner, approaches the bedside, the tale of sin and sorrow amid sighs and tears is whispered to his ear, the hands commissioned to bind and to loose, to forgive and retain sin, are lifted up, the mysterious words of pardon are pronounced, and quicker than thought the chains of sin are burst asunder, the lost soul is won back to the bosom of her God, and the angels sing a canticle of joy at the salvation of the repenting sinner.

The reconciliation is sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ. The priest says, "Receive, brother, the viaticum of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ: may it protect thee from the wicked enemy, and conduct thee to life everlasting." O supreme happiness of the soul, tasting for the last time on the death-bed the sweetness of Jesus in the Holy Communion. Tears of joy glisten in the eyes a little before so dim, serene hopes displace the black despair that a little before sat upon the brow, the heart a little before steeped in anguish and sorrow is filled with the joyous love of God, a sunbeam of heaven plays round the countenance, and lights up the face a little before so dejected; and the Holy Viaticum gives the soul in this life a foretaste of the joys of paradise. If unbelievers witnessed such a death-bed scene, like the Jews after the miracles at the Crucifixion, they would strike their breasts and say, "Truly He is the Son of God" in the holy Viaticum. After receiving Jesus in the holy Viaticum, the soul is happy, resigned to the will of God, patient to bear and suffer the pains of death, and wishes to "be dissolved and be with Christ." A dead man was thrown one day by robbers

into the tomb of Eliseus, and was immediately restored to life; if the withered bones of the prophet animated the dead, what will not the body and blood of Jesus do for the departing soul? Sweet Jesus! How good Thou art to come to our death-bed when we are sick and dying, to put to flight the demons, to smooth down the pillow of death, to take from the grave its sting and from death its victory, to make us happy, and to take us to Thyself!

Jesus comes to us at all times and to all places, in rain and in storm, in snow and in hail, in the pinching cold as in the burning heat, in midnight as in midday, to the wretched home of poverty in the bog or on the mountain, as well as to the stately palace of the king, to the poverty-stricken creature rotting in the garret, or the castaway, forgotten on the way-side, as to the tenant of the lordly mansion. To the fetid abode of fever, cholera, or plague, where death stares God's minister in the face, go the priest of Jesus will, yea, and go cheerfully, like his Divine Master, offering the sacrifice of his life for his flock. Reverentially in his bosom, over his heart, he bears the "Holy of Holies"—the holy Viaticum. On the way, while others may talk, he

heeds not, all his attention being centred in the Blessed Sacrament, and his soul absorbed in prayer to his God—prayers, perhaps, for the departing sinner. Thus Jesus in his mercy and love comes to the home of sickness and sorrow, to fortify the soul and help her to wing her flight to the bosom of her God. May we in dying receive this greatest and last of God's blessings, nay God Himself—the holy Viaticum.

The following fact is recorded by St. Charles Borromeo (*Memorial of a Christian Life*). During the great plague in Milan, a priest, bearing the holy Viaticum to the dying, passed by a heap of some sixty dead bodies, about to be interred. One man still living, and hearing the tinkling of the bell, cried out in a dying voice: "Father, for the love of God may I receive once again the holy Communion." The God whom he was carrying inspired the priest with courage; he hesitated not; walking over the dead, he gave holy Communion to the dying man, who in a few moments expired to enjoy and see that God face to face whom he had just received under the sacrament veil. Which is most worthy of admiration—the priest or penitent?

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In Catholic countries on the Continent the Holy Viaticum is carried to the sick under a rich canopy in solemn procession. The bells of the Church give notice to the public; the priest, vested in his holy robes, is accompanied by acolytes bearing lighted torches; one rings constantly a little bell to admonish the people that Jesus is passing by, and crowds of the faithful, especially members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, join the procession and carry lights. To encourage the faithful to this holy practice, Pope Innocent XI. granted an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines to all who accompany Jesus in the Viaticum with a lighted taper to the house of the sick. In Ireland the laws are against these public manifestations of faith and reverence; but we ought to do all in our power to mark our devotion and love to this most august Sacrament. The chamber of the sick person should be as clean and neat as possible. In it there should be prepared a table covered with a clean white napkin, on the table a crucifix, two wax candles, a vessel of holy water, another vessel or glass of common water, a spoon, and a clean towel or napkin for a communion cloth. Everything should manifest

our faith and love for the Lord of Glory about to come into the house.

If we cannot accompany our Blessed Lord to the sick in solemn procession with lighted torches, let us follow Jesus in spirit. Whenever we see a priest going to or returning from the dying, let us adore and love Jesus whom he bears in his bosom. When we pray before the Blessed Sacrament, let us beg this favor —the greatest favor which heaven can bestow —to receive in peace the holy Viaticum on our death-beds; to receive for the last time our Divine Lord in faith, in hope, and love. To die with Jesus in the heart is "to fall asleep in the Lord," and "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

O happiness, to die after having received in our hearts the God who created and redeemed us, and who in a few moments will judge us! O happiness, to close our eyes to this miserable world after having received the pledge of eternal life! "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," says the Redeemer, "hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day" (*John* vi. 55). "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever." Consummation of supreme happiness! to see face to face the

same God, whom during our lives long we adored and loved under the sacramental veils, to hear from his Divine lips this sweet invitation, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord" (*Matt.* xxv. 21.) Joy which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" (1 *Cor.* ii. 9). Joy of the Lord! "To be inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and drink for ever of the torrent of his pleasures" (*Ps.* xxv. 9). May we see the joy of the Lord.

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul, what a treasure to receive the blessing of God himself! Yet it is true Jesus blesses thee. In Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament thou dost receive the blessing of the Son of God himself. Hast thou appreciated it? How often hast thou neglected it?

Not only does Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament bless and feed thee during life, but in dying, at the supreme and awful moment of death, he comes to thy bed-side to fortify and comfort thee, to make thee happy, and take thee to himself to heaven. O holy Viaticum!

RESOLUTION.

In atonement for my past ingratitude, and in reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I resolve never to omit, even at considerable inconvenience, Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. Secondly, in love and thanksgiving to Jesus in the holy Viaticum, I resolve to be most zealous in preparing, whenever I have an opportunity, the requisites for the communion of the sick, and every day of my life to beseech the Almighty God to bestow upon me the greatest of all blessings—the blessing of receiving worthily the Most Holy Viaticum.

Most Holy Sacrament, strengthen my weakness to keep for Thy greater glory these my resolutions.

CHAPTER XIV.

Holy habit of the presence of God, and aspirations or ejaculatory prayer to the Blessed Sacrament.

Section I.

Presence of God.

Jesus is God. We belong wholly to him. He created and redeemed us. He preserves us

every moment of our existence. Our souls and bodies are his property. Every moment of our lives is his. For him we must live, for him we must die. The glory of God is the beginning and end of our creation. Though God's own intrinsic glory is infinite, still he is jealous of the little we can give him. No rival shall dare dispute his right. We, our souls and bodies, must serve him. Such is the command of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy strength, and with all thy mind" (*Deut.* vi. 5). What could be more comprehensive? Our hearts with all their affections, our souls with all their faculties, our bodies with all their senses, belong to God: that is, Almighty God expects and demands, as he has a right to, all the service of our souls and bodies every moment of our lives. To fulfil this great and first precept God in His mercy gives us abundant graces. The constant remembrance of His divine presence is, perhaps, one of the greatest means to serve him faithfully, and to arrive even in a short time at perfection. This we learn from the sacred Scripture and the writings of the saints. God himself said to Abra-

ham, "Walk before me, and be you perfect" (*Gen.* xvii. 1). To walk before God is to remember his presence. The Royal Prophet not only praised God seven times a day, but says, "I had always our Lord present before my eyes, because I know that he is always at my right hand, to hinder anything from troubling me" (*Ps.* xv. 8). The holy Tobias gave this parting advice to his son: "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind" (*Tob.* iv. 6).

The saints extol the holy practice of the presence of God. St. Bonaventure says, "That to employ ourselves continually in the exercise of the presence of God, is to begin in this life to enjoy the felicity of the blessed in the next." SS. Teresa, Liguori, and others call it a "short and easy road to perfection." "In a word," adds St. Liguori, "by this exercise of the presence of God, the saints have succeeded in acquiring great treasures of merits" (*Sp. of Christ*).

God sees us! The great truth, God sees us, is the terror of the wicked and consolation of the just. The wicked man, to indulge his sinful passions, may say in the folly of his heart, I will seek darkness, I will hide in lonely

places; no body shall see me. Ah! God sees you. His eye is upon you. Midnight and midday are both the same to His all-seeing eye. He is equally present in the depth of the forest and the depth of the ocean. How beautifully the Psalmist expresses it: "If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I descend to hell, you are present. If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall your hand hold me" (*Ps.* cxxxviii. 8). "The spirit of our Lord fills the whole earth" (*Wis.* i. 7). "Do not I fill the heavens and the earth, saith the Lord" (*Jer.* xxiii. 24). St. Paul is not less sublime. "God," he says, "is not far from any of us. in Him we live, move, and have our being" (*Acts* xvii. 27). No words could be more expressive. In God we exist, walk, breathe, think, and live. He is everywhere within us and around us. More really than the sponge in the midst of the sea is surrounded and filled with water, does God fill and penetrate our souls and bodies. God is present in our souls, and equally present in the most remote fixed star, countless millions of miles distant. Multiply that distance by itself, and there is God also present. Let the

human mind expand its thoughts till lost in space, there also is the eye of God. In a word, all created space is but a point in the infinite immensity of God! And still God loves us, and we can love, nay, possess God.

God sees us! Truth terrible to the wicked. God counts not only their sinful acts and words, but notes down every evil thought in the book of life and death. God sees us. Consolation to the just. Not only does he reckon our good deeds, but he remembers every holy thought, to reward it with an eternal weight of glory! These holy thoughts we can, by the grace of God, conceive and multiply; and each is written by the hand of God in the book of life.

The first great effect of the habit of the presence of God is to preserve the soul from sin. Who would dare commit sin under the eye of a father or mother? But how infinitely more withering is the eye of God upon the sinner! To remember God, and to commit sin, is impossible. We sin because we forget God's presence. "He has not God before his eyes," says the Royal Prophet, "and therefore he is defiled with all sorts of crimes" (*Ps.* ix. 26). St. Jerome says: "The remembrance of God

banishes all sorts of sins" (*Liber de Fide Re*); and adds, that "when we find ourselves tempted to commit any sin, if we should think that God beholds us, and that he is present with us, we should never consent to anything displeasing to him." St. Teresa concludes: Every evil happens to us because we do not reflect that God is present with us, but imagine he is at a distance." The remembrance of the presence of God gave courage to the chaste Susanna to resist the temptations and threats of the elders. "It is better for me," said she, "to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord" (*Dan.* xiii. 23). The certainty and remembrance that God, who "can cast our bodies and souls into hell," sees our acts, hears our words, knows our most secret thoughts, cannot but prevent us from doing, speaking, or thinking evil before His eyes.

The second great effect of the presence of God is courage to advance in virtue. A soldier under the eye of his captain rushes to death or victory. We are soldiers of Christ. His eye is upon us. He sees our struggles. He knows our temptations. He looks with complacency upon us fighting the battles of

the Lord. He will reward even a good desire. What a powerful motive to fight against sin, to conquer temptations, to practice secret virtue! "I remembered God," says King David, "and was delighted" (*Ps.* lxxvi. 4); delighted to please Him for His own sake. The presence of God is best kept up in the soul by doing all things solely to please Him. This leads us to our next section—*purity of intention.*

Section II.

Purity of Intention.

We ought to be holy. Jesus has given us the means. He has given us Himself so many ways. The more pious we become, the more we shall love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The soul He wishes to sanctify He draws to the foot of the altar; and purity of intention is a great help to love Jesus in the sacrament of his love.

We belong wholly to God. Our days and nights, our years and lives, all the services of our souls and bodies, are his by right and by precept. He has commanded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength,

and with all thy mind." Have we kept this precept? Examine your lives. First, subtract from your lives the days, perhaps years, spent in mortal sin. These years are evil and not for God. Secondly, take away all the years given to the world; all the actions, no matter how good in themselves, done through human motives. For these there will be no reward on the day of judgment. How much remains for God? How many years, nay, days, given to the Almighty? The servant in the gospel is condemned, not because he squandered, but because he did not profit by his master's talents. The bad Christian has done both: not only he has not profited by his life, but he has squandered in sin the talents of his years given him by God to purchase heaven. Purity of intention will give to the Almighty what belongs to him—our lives.

The intention is the soul of our acts. God looks not to the hand or arm, but to the will and heart. "Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (I. *Kings* xvi.). The intention stamps the value of the act, whether for good or evil. "If the eye be evil," says our blessed Redeemer, "the whole body will be darksome" (*Matt.* vi. 23):

that is, if the intention be bad, the whole action will be sinful in the sight of God. On the other hand, our Saviour added: "If thy eye be single, thy whole body will be lightsome" (*Matt.* vi. 22): that is, if the intention be holy, the action, in itself good, will be pleasing in the sight of the Almighty. St. Augustine says: "God attends not so much to what man does, as to the motives of his acts." "The good which you will do," continues St. Ambrose, "shall be proportioned to the purity of intention with which you do it for the divine glory."

What intention, then, ought to animate our acts? St. Paul tells us: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 *Cor.* x. 31). And again: "Whatever you do in word or work, do all for the glory of God." Hence, to do all our actions for the greater glory of God, solely to please Him and fulfil His blessed will, is the most holy and perfect intention on earth, or even in heaven above. The gospel says of Jesus Christ: "He did all things well" (*Mark* vii. 37); and our Saviour Himself so often tells us for our instruction, the intention with which He performed His ac-

tions. The will, the glory of His Eternal Father, was the end of all His acts. "I do always the things that please Him" (*John* viii. 29). "I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (*John* v. 30). And again: "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me" (*John* iv. 32). Hence, St. Basil concludes: "The whole conduct of a Christian proposes to itself only one end, which is the glory of God."

There is no doubt but many, even good Christians, lose the greater part of their lives, and the reward of many good acts, for want of a proper intention. It is certain that no action, no matter how good in itself, is meritorious of glory in the sight of God, except it be animated by charity and directed by a supernatural motive. St. Paul says: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity"—that is, except I do it for God—"it profiteth me nothing" (*Cor.* xiii. 3). On the other hand, the widow's mite and cup of cold water, given for God, will be rewarded in the kingdom of heaven. It is therefore evident that a supernatural motive, a pure intention in all our

acts, is of the highest importance for our salvation.

How reduce it to practice? By the grace of God, nothing is more easy. When our eyes open in the morning, let the first object they see be God, and immediately offer to His greater glory all the thoughts, words, and actions of the day; we may express it in this form: "My good God, I offer to Thy greater glory all the thoughts, words, and actions of this day." What a holy beginning of the day! We go to our daily avocations, each to the duties of his state in life—one to the plough, another to the meadow, one to his shop, another to his desk; and we begin each action by offering it to God. Thus, whether we read or write, walk or talk, labor in the field, or work in the house, eat or drink, even when we go to sleep, we do all to the glory of God. Each action is sanctified by this supernatural motive or intention, and it is holy; for in thus fulfilling with a pure intention the duties of our state in life—no matter what they be—we are doing the will of God, than which nothing can be more holy. "The will of God," says St. Paul, "is your sanctification" (*Thess.* iv. 3). "Whosoever does

the will of my Father," says our blessed Saviour, "he is my brother, my sister, and my mother" (*Mat.* xii. 50). Each action of the twenty-four hours of the day is a holy prayer, and thus we fulfil the precept of Jesus Christ, who says, "We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (*Luke* xviii. 1); and of St. Paul, who says, "Pray always; pray without ceasing" (*Thess.* v. 17).

A year spent in this manner is a long time. Of the saints who thus lived, though they died young, like SS. Aloysius, Stanislaus, Berchmans, and many others, the Holy Ghost says, that they have thus lived entire all their days, and they died full of days. And, as the sacred Scripture says of the just man, that "being made perfect in a short space, they filled a long time." "For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years, but the understanding of a man is gray hairs, and a spotless life is old age" (*Wis.* iv. 8, 9, 13). That "in the short time they lived they fulfilled a great space or length of time" (*Wis.* iv. 13). We conclude this section with St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzis, who says, that "a person who performs all his actions with the pure inten-

tion of the glory of God, goes straight to heaven, without passing through the fires of purgatory." May Jesus for his greater glory give us purity of intention!

Section III.

Union with Jesus.

The habit of offering all our actions to the greater glory of God, of performing them solely to please Him and doing His blessed will, is the first step on the road that leads straight to God. This is what Father Faber calls "The devotion of saying Mass with all the actions of the day."

It is true when the soul is dazzled in contemplating the transcendent holiness of God, and confounded at her own nothingness, she becomes ashamed, so to speak, to offer to Him her worthless actions. But let her be comforted; for she can offer to God His own divine attributes and perfections. She can rejoice in His own infinite glory, sanctity and power. She can offer to Him, not only the praises of holy souls on earth, all the love of the saints, the angels, and Mary in bliss, but, infinitely beyond all, she can offer to Him all

the glory, homage, and praise that Jesus Christ gave Him on earth, now gives Him, and will give Him for all eternity in heaven. Such are the riches of our poverty.

And then there is "Union with Jesus." We said a few words in a former chapter on "Union with Jesus on the altar." At every hour, nay every moment of the day and night, the "clean oblation" is offered, the Divine Lamb is immolated in some part of the world. At every moment, and sometimes on a hundred altars simultaneously, the Sacrifice of Calvary is renewed and continued, to adore and worship the Almighty for all mankind, to thank Him for His favors, to atone for sin, to supplicate salvation for the world, to obtain hope for the despairing, strength for the relapsing, pardon for the repenting, heaven for the dying. What a holy habit to unite ourselves and all our actions with Jesus thus unceasingly immolated! This is "Union with Jesus on the Altar," but the subject of this section is "Union with Jesus in the Flesh."

We belong to Jesus. It is our glory and privilege. Jesus, too, in a sense, belongs to us. He delivered Himself for us. His blood redeemed us. He pleads for us in heaven.

His life in the flesh is ours. Union with Jesus will sanctify our ordinary actions of the day. Our best actions are imperfect and utterly worthless in the presence of infinite sanctity; but when united with the actions of Jesus Christ, they become precious in the sight of God.

Jesus in the flesh ate and drank, prayed and fasted, toiled and slept, suffered and died. Each action was of infinite value, being the action of the Man-God. We can unite our actions with those of our blessed Lord, who will sanctify them; and thus united to Him and sanctified by Him, we may with humble confidence offer them to His eternal Father, who will accept and bless them through love and reverence for His only begotten Son, "in whom He is well pleased." Rodriguez tells us, that God revealed to St. Mechtildis that it was most pleasing to Him to offer Him all our actions in union with those of Jesus Christ. St. Teresa also says, that "every one will gain the desired end of his prayers more efficaciously by offering his actions to the Eternal Father in union with the merits of Jesus Christ." SS. Gertrude and Mary Magdalene of Pazzi tell us that Jesus Christ

Himself taught them the value of this holy practice.

Jesus Christ Himself says in the Gospel (*John* xiv. 13), "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name He shall grant you, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," and St. Paul says that God made us acceptable through His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. Our actions, then, will be precious in the eyes of God, when united with the infinite actions of Jesus, when presented by Jesus, who is so pleasing to the Eternal Father, and who, in presenting them, is our "mediator," our "advocate," and our "brother." "Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "is not ashamed to call us His brethren" (*Heb.* ii. 12).

But to come to the practice. Nothing is more easy. Nothing is more easy than to say in the morning, "My good God, I offer to Thy greater glory all the thoughts, words, and actions of this day, in union with those of Jesus Christ." Thus the day begins with the sweet names of God and Jesus! Time flies, hours roll by, action succeeds action, each is sanctified by the same holy union with Jesus. Moreover, we begin each action of

the day by offering it to God in union with Jesus. We may express it thus, "I offer this action to God in union with Jesus." A glance, a motion of the will towards God, is sufficient to complete this oblation. The oblation is a perfect work, pleasing to God, dear to Jesus, full of merit for ourselves. One tear, any one act of Jesus, would be sufficient to redeem the whole world. Happy then the Christian who gives his days and his nights, his months and his years, his life and his death, to the glory of God, in union with the life and death of Jesus Christ. May God above grant us this happiness.

Section IV.

Aspirations or ejaculatory prayer to the Blessed Sacrament.

We have seen what a great help to love Jesus is the remembrance of the presence of God. The great truth, let us repeat it, that God sees us everywhere is the terror of the wicked. How expressive the words of St. Augustine, who says, "When I attentively consider, O Lord, that you have your eyes continually fixed upon me, and that night and day you keep a continual watch over me,

with so great care as if neither in heaven nor on earth you had any other creature to govern besides myself,—when I think that you behold all my actions, that you penetrate my most secret and hidden thoughts, and that all my desires are exposed to your view, I find myself filled with confusion" (*Confessions*). If the saint feared the eye of God, what shall the sinner do? Can the sinner indulge in guilt under the withering eye of God, who could that instant cast him body and soul into hell-fire?

In heaven the blessed enjoy the beatific vision, seeing God face to face; and to see him is to love and enjoy Him. On earth the just by the eyes of faith see God, in prayer they converse with Him, in love they enjoy Him. Now the perpetual presence of God is best kept up in the soul by short prayers or ejaculations.

The saints tell us that the frequent use of aspirations is the practice of the presence of God, and a short and easy road to perfection. St. Francis of Sales says that "the great fabric of devotion leans upon this exercise, that it can supply the defects of all other prayers, and that all other prayers cannot supply the

defect of it." Another saint calls these aspirations "inflamed arrows which pierce the heavens." Aspirations have also this great advantage: they do not, like long prayers, fatigue the mind; we can make them in all places and at all times, and unobserved by those who sit or work by our side; we can multiply them in thousands. God sees each holy motion of the heart, God counts and will reward these holy heavings of the soul towards heaven.

How often ought we remember God?

St. Paul, as we before remarked, says, "Pray always; pray without ceasing:" and the Royal Psalmist says, "I had always our Lord present before my eyes;" and again, "Seek our Lord and be confirmed; seek his face continually" (*Ps.* civ. 4). That is, at all times and in all places we ought to endeavor to keep God before our eyes. St. Bernard says, "As there is not a moment in which we do not enjoy the benefits of God, so there is not a moment in which we should not remember God and prove our gratitude." St. Gregory concludes, "We ought not to draw breath so often as we should remember God"

(*Orat. de Cura Paup.*). It is recorded in the life of Gregory Lopez, that for three whole years he made in his heart at every respiration this sweet ejaculation: "Thy will be done on earth as it is heaven!" Wonderful is God in His saints. Jesus give us the spirit of the saints.

God in His infinite goodness has made this practise easy for all. Than it the saints have nothing higher or holier, and still it is at the door, within the reach and capacity, of the poor, simple, and uneducated. It is enough to know "Christ and Him crucified." Let us see the practice. We begin the day and each action by offering it to the "greater glory of God in union with the actions of Jesus." We are employed at the duties of our state in life. One labors in the field, another goes to his shop, another at his desk; one goes a journey, another goes to work; the hands are engaged, but the heart is ever free to think of God. Amid the most distracting occupations, amid the noise and turmoil of a busy world, we can preserve a solitude in our souls, in the secret closets of our hearts—alone with God, we can adore and love Him. How refreshing in fatigue to think of Jesus

in the Blessed Sacrament, to invite Him into our souls, and entertain Him with holy affections. Jesus on the altar ever thinks of us; our hearts ought ever be with Him in the tabernacle. Jesus is ever loving us, His bountiful hand is ever diffusing favors upon us; we ought ever love Him, ever thank Him. Amid our occupations, when our hands are engaged, what more easy, than to turn our hearts to Him, and say, "Jesus, my God, I love Thee. My Jesus, I wish to love Thee as Thou dost deserve. My God, I offer Thee the love of earth and heaven" (*Cant.* ii. 16). "What have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever" (*Ps.* lxxii. 25).

Then we may thank God. St. Augustine says there is no prayer more beautiful than "Thanks be to God." If there be one more beautiful, it is the prayer of our fore fathers, a prayer which sounds so sweetly in our native Celtic tongue, a prayer which expresses the warm gratitude of the Irish heart: it is "Millions of praises unto God!" May we love that prayer and often reapeat it from our heart.

At another time we can elevate our hearts to God by acts of conformity to the divine will. "Let not my will O Lord, but thine be done." "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." "Teach me to do thy will" (*Ps.* cvii. 2). "What, O Lord, wilt thou have me to do?" (*Acts* ix. 6). In crosses and disappointments, in sorrows and trials, in sickness and death, let us say with holy Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord" (*Job* i. 21).

At another time we turn and unite ourselves to God by fervent acts of petition. We cannot repeat too often the beautiful aspiration which St. Vincent de Paul ever had in his mouth: "Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me" (*Ps.* lxxix. 1). We can whisper to heaven fervent acts of sorrow for our sins. "God be merciful to me a sinner." "The sins of my youth and my ignorance remember not, O Lord." "Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out my iniquities" (*Ps.* l. 10). I am sorry for my sins because they displease Thy infinite goodness. Would that I could turn all my past sins into acts of divine love! I will sin no more.

In our secret hearts we can beg of God the grace never more to offend Him, and the grace of final perseverance. My God, grant me grace to keep Thy commandments; grant me grace never more to offend Thee. My God, I would rather a thousand deaths than offend Thee by one mortal sin. Dear Lord! grant me the grace of final perseverance, a happy death, and a favorable judgment. May I possess Thyself in paradise.

We work at our daily labor—let not Jesus in the blessed Sacrament be forgotten. At each instant the divine Lamb is immolated for us; let us, at least, remember Him. Amid our occupations we can preserve in our hearts a little cell, a little tabernacle, for the Holy of holies. Jesus is our sacrifice, Jesus is our sacrament; let us thank Him for both. I thank Thee, my Jesus, for all the masses that ever have been celebrated. I thank Thee for all the graces I have received at Thy altar. Infinite praise to Thee for having fed my soul so often with Thy adorable body and blood. I wish to remain always before Thy tabernacle, and to offer to Thee, at every moment, the praises and love of men and angels. My Jesus, pardon all my irreverences towards Thee in

the Blessed Eucharist. Grant me love for the adorable sacrifice of the mass, love for the bread of angels, desire and love to visit Thee daily. Come into my heart, Dear Lord, may I always receive Thee worthily. On my deathbed be my viaticum, in heaven be my reward. The holy soul never tires repeating the following beautiful ejaculations: "Praised and blessed at every moment be the most holy and divine sacrament." "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like to Thy heart." "My Jesus, mercy." "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere." "Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us."

We only have been suggesting a few aspirations, or rather the order of aspirations, such as aspirations of love, of thanksgiving, and of petition. But the pious soul may be left free to the influence of divine grace. The spirit of God sweetly and silently "breathes where He wills," speaks to the heart and suggests new thoughts and prayers known only to God, and to be known to men only on the day of judgment. Neither learning nor talent is required, only a loving and humble heart. How often have we not witnessed it! How often have we not heard the poor uneducated, when

in sorrow or pain, but above all when dying, express in their own simple but telling language of the heart, the holiest thoughts, and give vent to the ardent love of their souls in aspirations of the highest and most supernatural order? Were they not whispered from heaven? Yes; for from the countenance, though agonized with pain, there seemed already to beam forth a ray of heaven's glory.

Let us repeat how happy, how holy the day, the night thus spent in close union with God! Each work is influenced by divine grace, and directed by supernatural motives. God is never absent from the mind. In this attention of the mind to God there is no strain, no violence. As matter naturally gravitates towards the centre, so our souls naturally incline to, and lean upon, God, their Centre and Author. Whilst the hands work the heart prays. God is never forgotten: amid the most distracting occupations, peace and calm reign in the soul. As the waves of the sea may beat upon the rock whilst it remains steadfast with the sunshine of heaven glittering on its summit, so the soul in the midst of the world's din, buffeted by by the world's cares, remains itself calm and unmoved, and all the while

the light of God's countenance shines in upon it.

The soul, thus "praying at all times in spirit," ever fervent, like the garden, refreshed by the dew of heaven and watered by a gushing fountain, is ever producing an abundance of beautiful plants and flowers. Prayer is the dew from heaven upon the soul; "the fountain of living waters which run with a strong stream from Libanus," is the habit of fervent aspirations. The soul thus watered, thus refreshed by the grace of God, is ever fervent, is ever in flower and blossom, ever producing the precious, the rich fruits of holy desires and good works. "Blessed is the man," says the Word of God, "who shall meditate on His law day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season: his leaf shall not fall off: and whatsoever he shall do shall prosper" (*Ps.* l. 3).

PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! how abundant the means God in His infinite mercy has given thee for thy salvation, and to increase thy glory in heaven.

By a little attention the whole day and night can be one continued prayer—pleasing to God, meritorious of glory. God is within thee and round about thee. He will hear and accept thy good desires. Keep God and Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament before thee the whole day long. Constantly praise that good God who at every instant of thy life bestows blessings and graces upon thee.

RESOLUTIONS.

My dear God, my love in the tabernacle, for Thy greater glory, and through love and gratitude for Thy countless mercies, known and unknown, I resolve, first, to avoid, to the utmost of my power, every deliberate sin, venial as well as mortal. Secondly, every morning of my life I will offer to Thy greater glory all the actions of the day, in union with those of Jesus Christ. I will say: "My good God, I offer to Thy greater glory all the thoughts, words, and actions of this day, in union with those of Jesus Christ, and for the holy intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ." Thirdly, I resolve to begin every action or work of the day by the same offering. I will say: "My good God, I offer to Thy

greater glory this work, in union with the actions of Jesus Christ." And lastly, during my little occupations, I resolve to remember Thy Divine Presence and the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, by fervent aspirations. Sacred Heart of Jesus! grant me grace to keep these my resolutions. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, recommend me to the Sacred Heart of thy Son!

We here subjoin a collection of indulgenced prayers and aspirations, which will be useful for all, but especially for the sick and dying, who are incapable of reciting long prayers. It is such a holy thing for the sick to have constantly in their hearts, as well as on their tongues, these short prayers, which will keep their souls in union with God, while the indulgences gained will shorten their purgatory in the world to come.

Morning Offering and Intention.

My good God, I offer to Thy greater glory all the thoughts, words, and actions of this day, in union with those of Jesus Christ, for

the holy intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and I desire to gain all the indulgences annexed to the pious prayers and aspirations I may make during the day.

Indulgenced Aspirations.

1. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, earth is full of Thy glory. Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, glory be to the Holy Ghost (Clement XIV., June 26, 1770)—100 days.

2. Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like to Thy Heart (Pius IX., 1869)—300 days.

3. [*To be said before an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*] My loving Jesus, in order to show the grateful love I bear Thee, and to make reparation for my unfaithfulness to grace, I [*N.*] give Thee my heart, and I consecrate myself wholly to Thee, and, with Thy help, I purpose never to sin again (Pius VII., June 9, 1807)—100 days.

4. Praised and blessed at every moment be the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament (Pius VI., May 24, 1776)—100 days.

5. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me (Pius IX.)—100 days.

6. My Jesus, mercy (Pius IX., Sept. 23, 1846)—100 days.

7. To salute any one, saying, "Praised be Jesus Christ," or to answer, saying, "For ever, Amen" (Sixtus V., July 11, 1587)—100 days.

8. Sweet Heart of Jesus, be thou my love —300 days.

9. Jesus, my God, I love Thee above all things (Pius IX., May 7, 1854)—50 days.

10. My sweetest Jesus, be not to me a Judge, but a Saviour (Pius IX., Aug. 11, 1851)—50 days.

11. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere (Pius IX.)—100 days.

12. Devoutly saying, "Jesus and Mary" (Sixtus V., July 11, 1587)—25 days.

13. Eternal Father, I offer Thee the most precious blood of Jesus Christ in satisfaction for my sins and the wants of the Holy Church (Pius VII., March 22, 1817)—100 days.

14. Eternal Father, we offer Thee the blood, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, the sorrows of the Most Holy Mary and St. Joseph, in payment for our sins, in suffrage for the holy souls in purgatory, for the wants of our holy mother the Church, and for the conver-

sion of sinners (Pius IX., April 30, 1860)—100 days.

15. For those in their last agony. O Most Merciful Jesus, Lover of Souls, I pray Thee by the agony of Thy Most Sacred Heart, and by the Sorrows of Thy Immaculate Mother, cleanse in Thine own Blood the sinners of the whole world who are now in their last agony, and to die this day, amen. Heart of Jesus, once in agony, have pity on the dying (Pius IX., Feb. 2, 1850)—100 days.

16. Divine Mercy, incarnate in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, inundate the world, and diffuse Thyself upon us (Pius IX., Dec. 10, 1866)—100 days.

17. I adore Thee every moment, O Living Bread of Heaven, Great Sacrament! Jesus! Heart of Mary, I pray Thee send Thy blessing on my soul. Holiest Jesus! Loving Saviour! I give Thee my heart. May all know, adore, and praise every moment, always, the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament (Leo XII., Aug. 13, 1828)—100 days.

18. May the most just, the most high, the most amiable will of God be done, praised, and eternally exalted in all things (Pius VII., May 19, 1818)—100 days.

19. Blessed be God. Blessed be His holy Name. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Blessed be the name of Jesus. Blessed be Jesus Christ in the most holy sacrament of the altar. Blessed be the great mother of God, the most holy Virgin Mary. Blessed be the holy and immaculate conception. Blessed be the name of Mary, virgin and mother. Blessed be God in His angels and saints (Pius VII., July 23 1801)—365 days.

20. Soul of Jesus, sanctify me. Body of Jesus, save me. Blood of Jesus, inebriate me. Water flowing from the side of Jesus, wash me. Passion of Jesus, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Hide me in Thy wounds. Permit not that I should be separated from Thee. Defend me from the malignant enemy. Call me at the hour of my death, and bid me come to Thee, that with Thy saints I may praise Thee for all eternity. Amen (Pius IX., January 9, 1854) —300 days.

21. Behold, my most loving Jesus, to what an excess Thy boundless love has carried Thee. Of Thine own flesh and precious blood Thou hast made ready for me a banquet, in order to

give me all Thyself. What is it that impelled Thee to this transport of love for me? It was Thy Heart, Thy loving Heart. O adorable Heart of my Jesus! burning furnace of love! within Thy most sacred wound receive Thou my soul, that in this school of charity I may learn to requite the love of that God who has given me such wondrous proofs of His love. Amen (Pius VI., Nov. 7, 1787)—100 days.

22. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I offer to you my heart and soul (Pius VII., April 28, 1807)—100 days.

23. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony (Pius VII., April 28, 1807)—100 days.

24. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace to you (Pius VII., April 28, 1807)—100 days.

25. Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation (Pius IX., Sept. 30, 1852)—300 days.

26. Blessed be the holy and immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Pius VI., Nov. 21, 1793)—100 days.

27. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us (Pius IX.)—100 days.

28. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us (Pius IX.)—100 days.

29. Hail, Mary, full of sorrows, the Crucified is with thee. Compassionate art thou amongst women, and worthy of compassion is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of the Crucified, obtain tears of compunction for us crucifiers of thy Son, now and at the hour of our death. Amen (Pius IX., December 23, 1847)—100 days.

30. O angel of God, whom God hath appointed to be my guardian, enlighten and direct, protect and govern me (Pius VI., Nov. 21, 1793)—100 days.

31. Guardian of virgins and holy father Joseph, to whose faithful care Jesus Christ, Innocence itself, and Mary, Virgin of virgins, were committed, I pray and beseech thee by these dear pledges, Jesus and Mary, that being preserved from all uncleanness, I may with a spotless mind, pure heart, and chaste body, ever most chastely serve Jesus and Mary all the days of my life (Pius IX., February 3, 1863)—For laity 100 days, for priests 365 days.

32. Foster-father Joseph, our guide, protect us and the holy Church (Pius IX., Jan. 27, 1863)—50 days.

33. Remember, most pure husband of Mary ever Virgin, my loving protector Joseph, that

never hath it been heard that any one invoked thy protection or asked aid of thee, who has not been consoled. In this confidence I come before thee. I fervently recommend myself to thee. Despise not my prayer, reputed father of the Saviour of men, but do thou in thy pity receive it. Amen (Pius IX., June 26, 1863)—300 days.

34. When assaulted by temptation, say: My Queen! my Mother! remember I am thine own. Keep me, defend me as thy property, thine own possession (Pius IX., August 25, 1851)—40 days.

35. Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; may grace be with me. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is holy Anne, thy mother, from whom, O Virgin Mary, thou didst come forth free from all stain of sin; then of thee was born Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God. Amen (Pius VII., Jan. 10, 1815)—100 days.

36. The prayer of St. Bernard—Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary, that it was never known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of vir-

gins. My mother, to thee I come, before thee I stand sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy clemency answer me. Amen. (Pius IX., Dec. 11, 1846)—300 days.

37. In honor of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin, recalling to mind the Passion of Jesus Christ. Seven Ave Marias, with the versicle to each—Holy Mother, pierce me through; in my heart each wound renew of my Saviour crucified (Pius VII., Dec. 1, 1815)—300 days.

38. For saying, kneeling, and at the sound of the bell, the Angelus, morning, noon, and evening, in honor of the Incarnation (Benedict XIII., Sept. 14, 1724)—300 days.

39. For devoutly reciting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin (Pius VII., Sept. 30, 1817)—300 days.

40. For devoutly reciting the Litany of Jesus (Pius IX.)—200 days.

41. Three Glorias, Glory be to the Father, etc., three times, morning, noon, and evening, to thank the Blessed Trinity for the graces and privileges granted to the Blessed Virgin in her assumption into heaven (Pius VIII., July 11, 1815)—300 days.

42. For saying, in making the sign of the cross —In the name of the Father, etc. (Pius IX., July 28, 1863)—50 days.

43. O Jesus, who dost live in Mary, come and live in Thy servants, in the spirit of Thine own holiness, in the fullness of Thy power, in the reality of Thy virtues, in the perfection of Thy ways, in the communion of Thy mysteries. Have Thou dominion over every adverse power, in Thine own spirit, to the glory of Thy Father (Pius IX., Oct. 14, 1859)—300 days.

44. For praying, according to the intention of the Holy Father, which intention is sufficiently complied with by saying five Paters and Aves, etc., before a representation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, exposed for public veneration at any chapel or altar (Pius VII., January 2, 1799)—7 years and 7 quarantines.

45. For adoring Jesus Christ in the blessed Sacrament at the elevation at mass, saying at the same time some short prayer (Gregory XIII., April 10, 1580)—365 days.

All these indulgences may be applied to the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory.

We have now finished our task, which has been rather a labor of love than a task. As devotion to the blessed Sacrament on the part of the simple people was our chief object, we have endeavored to say nothing but what might be intelligible, instructive, and edifying to the poor and uneducated.

How far we may have succeeded in our feeble efforts we know not; but if only one mortal sin be prevented, or if the love of Jesus be increased only in one soul by this little work, our humble labor will have been amply rewarded.

And, even if no good to others were to come of it, it was a delightful occupation for a minister of Christ, however unworthy, to meditate upon the Divine Victim that is immolated every day on God's altar.

We beg the blessing of the Sacred Heart of Jesus upon our poor offering of love.

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AUTHOR

Dove of the Tabernacle, th

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